'THE NOBLE GAME IS NOT TOTALLY UNKNOWN HERE': RUGBY FOOTBALL IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CARDIFF

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Certificate of Research

This is to certify that, except where specific reference is made, the work described in this thesis is the result of the candidate's research. Neither this thesis, nor any part of it, has been presented, or is currently submitted, in candidature for any degree at any other University.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the first detailed historical study of rugby in Wales at a local level. Drawing on previously unused sources, it provides fresh insights into the origins and early years of the game in Wales. It also throws new light on the significance of Cardiff to Welsh rugby in the nineteenth century as well as on the importance of rugby in Cardiff.

Chapter One explores early football and the eventual emergence of organised rugby in South Wales from its casual and hybrid origins. Chapter Two looks at the expansion of rugby from the mid 1870s, when the distinctive characteristics of Welsh rugby began to appear, up to the formation of the Welsh Rugby Union in 1881.

Chapter Three focuses on Cardiff during the last three decades of the nineteenth century with an in-depth examination and analysis of the range of clubs in the town and their institutional background. Chapter Four investigates the organisation of the game in Cardiff, the infrastructure used by the clubs and the social background of the players and administrators. Chapter Five considers the impact of the game on the life and popular culture of Cardiff.

The thesis concludes that rugby very rapidly became the main sporting interest in the town and it experienced little serious competition from other sports until the end of the century. For many newly arrived citizens, therefore, rugby provided an accessible means of quickly entering into the social life of the community. Cardiff's unique economic and social structure determined the particular way in which the game evolved in the town. At the local level, neighbourhood clubs, largely involving working and lower middle-class players and administrators, were generally the norm, rather than institutional teams organised by social improvers. At the highest level of competition, an emphasis on civic pride meant that success on the field was more important than social exclusivity. The game was played, therefore, by representatives of all classes. From the outset, Cardiff was at the centre of rugby in Wales: rugby was also at the heart of the Victorian town's popular culture.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father

Jim Prescott

(St. Peter's School, Cardiff Centrals, Grange Baptists)

who loved rugby football.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS PAGE

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I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Gareth Williams, without whose guidance, support and encouragement, this thesis would never have been completed. Like all good coaches, he always managed to keep me focused on getting the ball across the try line. Whether it was providing sources, or drawing on his unrivalled expertise to comment on all aspects of my progress, his help was invariably given with his customary good humour. The happiest outcome of my research is that I am now privileged to be able to call him a friend.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFC	Association Football Club
C&DFU	Cardiff and District Football Union
CDFU	Cardiff District Football Union
FA	Football Association
FAW	Football Association of Wales
FC	Football Club
FU	Football Union
GAV	Glamorgan Artillery Volunteers
GRV	Glamorgan Rifle Volunteers
GWR	Great Western Railway
IFU	Irish Football Union (Irish Rugby Football Union)
IJHS	International Journal of the History of Sport
IRB	International Rugby Board
NU	Northern Union
RFC	Rugby Football Club
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RMA	Royal Military Academy
RU	Rugby Union
RWF	Royal Welch Fusiliers
SFU	Scottish Football Union (Scottish Rugby Union)
SWDN	South Wales Daily News
SWFC	South Wales Football Club
SWFU	South Wales Football Union
WFU	Welsh Football Union
WM	Western Mail
WMC	Working Men's Club
WRU	Welsh Rugby Union

INTRODUCTION

'The noble game is not totally unknown here.' [1]

During miserable weather in February 1883, a decision was made in Wales which was to lead to profound changes in the way rugby has been played ever since. Cardiff were due to play at Cheltenham College but, owing to the dreadful conditions, only a few players bothered to turn up at the station. So a team was hurriedly cobbled together using some of the reserves who were also at the station travelling to an away fixture. Despite this, Cardiff won the match, not least because of the play of Frank Hancock, who was making his First XV debut at three-quarter. Within two months, and after only five games for Cardiff, he was capped by Wales against Ireland.

Hancock, who had recently arrived from Somerset to manage his father's brewing interests in the town, was already an established county footballer. It was a fortunate set of circumstances which brought him to Cardiff at a time when his leadership and tactical skills could be used to lasting benefit for the game.

Impressed with his performance at Cheltenham, the selectors decided to keep him in the team for the following fixture with Gloucester. Not wishing to drop any of the regular three-quarters, they took the inspired decision to pick four and so a new system was born. Cardiff continued to experiment with four three-quarters during the rest of the season and the following year. They sometimes reverted to three players, but settled on the new formation by the end of 1884-5, by which time other Welsh clubs were also occasionally selecting four three-quarters.[2] Hancock is often credited with "inventing" the system but it

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[1] On 14 Oct. 1878, the *Western Mail* published a letter from the Cardiff captain, Raoul Foa, who was responding to a suggestion from a newly arrived Devonian that a football club should be established in the town. Foa retorted ironically, and rather irritably, 'the noble game is not totally unknown here.'

[2] *South Wales Daily News* and *Western Mail* Sept. 1884 to Apr. 1885 passim. The clubs included Swansea, Llanelli and Neath. When Penarth played Canton, *both* adopted four three-quarters, revealing that even junior clubs were prepared to innovate at a very early stage. *SWDN* 17 Mar. 1885.

was his captain in those two seasons, Henry Simpson, who was the first to adopt it. Hancock, however, worked out the best method of applying the new formation and in so doing he helped to transform the game.

In August 1885, he was unanimously elected captain. Hancock had a reputation for being a disciplinarian and his impact on the club was immediate. Up to that season, Cardiff had enjoyed success, but they lacked consistency. The chaotic circumstances surrounding his introduction to the club eighteen months earlier must have made him realise that a dramatic change in organisation was required if Cardiff were to achieve their potential.

After the four three-quarter system had eventually become universally accepted, other clubs began to claim that they had played four three-quarters before Cardiff and therefore had "invented" the system.[3] But such claims miss the point. It wasn't so much the mere placing of four men in the line-up which mattered: rather it was what was done with the new formation which was revolutionary. This was Hancock's – and Cardiff's – great legacy.

Reducing the pack from nine to eight was potentially a great risk and it was initially strongly resisted by many pundits and clubs, even those in the generally more progressive north of England. For Cardiff, this was particularly risky because they did not possess big forwards. Hancock's solution was to encourage them to concentrate on winning and transferring the ball as quickly as possible, rather than engaging in prolonged scrums and mauls, which was then the conventional role for the forwards. Though this may not appear particularly innovative today, it certainly was so in the 1880s. For some, it represented nothing less than the emasculation of rugby football. Even as late as 1899, Arthur Budd was informing *Sporting Life* readers that English "decadence" began when they tried to imitate the Welsh three-quarter game and abandoned old style forward play.[4]

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[3] W.J. Townsend Collins, *Rugby Recollections* (Newport, 1948), p. 13 identifies two examples. However, he adds, "What is certain is that to Cardiff belongs the credit of having perfected the system." Following Wales' 1899 defeat of England, *The Sunday Special* incorrectly claimed, "The Welshmen ... have done splendid work in making Rugby football popular – even if they did obtain the system from the West of England clubs", quoted in *SWDN* 9 Jan. 1899.

[4] Quoted in *SWDN* 21 Mar. 1899.

Once the ball was delivered to the half backs, it was their responsibility to move it quickly and accurately from the scrum to the three-quarters. Cardiff were lucky here since in "Buller" Stadden they possessed one of the finest half-backs and passers of the ball of the era.[5] The role of the centre three-quarters was to feed the wings as quickly as possible with low, accurate passing. Since they were only facing three opponents, the wing usually already had an overlap by the time he received the ball.

The speed and accuracy of the passing of the ball confounded opponents whose own attempts at passing in response were feeble in comparison, often amounting to no more than lobbing the ball anywhere in the hope that someone would catch it. Only three teams managed to score against Cardiff all season. Used to a more sluggish style of play in which the ball was often tied up for minutes in mauls and in which passing was a rare event, spectators were sometimes said to be bewildered by the speed of the play and some had difficulty following the ball. On their way to their match at Stradey, the team were "saluted with a few stones and handfuls of mud". However, after their comprehensive ten try victory, they were greeted with cheers as they drove through the streets of Llanelli. The "passing game" had arrived. Even local journalists were impressed. "Llanellyite" perceptively wrote:

> the victorious team, not only should be the pride of Cardiff, but of the whole Principality, and strange it will be if their success does not stimulate to more scientific play the other teams of Wales, and operate to improve the exposition of the Rugby game generally.[6]

The results were astonishing. Of twenty-seven games played, only the last was lost when it seems that nerves finally got the better of the players. An even more remarkable statistic is that whilst a hundred and thirty-one tries were scored, only four were conceded. Gareth Williams has described the new system as, "a concept as enterprising and innovative as the

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[5] He was described as a "brilliant" half back by the *Football Annual*, 1887, p. 168.
[6] *SWDN* 16 Nov. 1885 (stones and mud); *WM* 16 Nov. 1885 ("Llanellyite").

brash, self-confident society that invented it."[7] It is no surprise then that in such an enterprising society, other Welsh clubs quickly responded to the new system by adopting it themselves, some before the end of the season. Thus, as "Llanellyite" predicted, before very long, the "Cardiff game" became the "Welsh game". English clubs like Gloucester, with regular fixtures against Welsh teams, also switched, but in the main it was initially resisted by many English, Scottish and Irish teams. A not untypical response was that of *Pastime*'s rugby "expert" who wrote, "There is really not room for four three-quarter backs on an ordinary ground. In Jemmy [sic] Stokes's day the post used to be taken with ease by *one*." [8] Even as late as 1897, following Wales' 11-0 victory over England, "Old Stager" was able to boast about "swift, sharp, low passing, which seems easy to crack local players, as it is pleasing to the eye of the spectator, and which is so difficult for the premier backs in the three sister countries to acquire." [9]

One of the most common descriptions of the play of Hancock's team was its "machine-like" quality. To modern ears this may sound rather negative, conveying a sense of the mundane, the mechanical and the repetitive. However, at the high summer of Britain's industrial revolution, which had so transformed the lives of Victorians, the analogy was both valid and complimentary. Combination, precision, speed and practice were the keys to the system's success. Unfortunately, these proved difficult to transfer successfully to the international level, where teams were assembled at short notice and with no opportunity for practice. Also, initially Wales simply did not have strong enough forwards to compete with the bigger nine-man packs of the other nations. Only towards the end of the 1890s, with the emergence of the "Rhondda forward," were Wales finally able to prove conclusively the superiority of their system and silence its critics for ever. After Wales' decisive victory over England in 1899, the *Morning Leader* declared:

> Our methods, like our "rulers", are antiquated ... After Saturday's lesson the contagion will spread, and in a few years' time we will doubtless see the "Welsh

[7] Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That: Essays on Rugby Football, Sport and Welsh Society* (Llandysul, 1991), p. 19.
[8] Quoted in *SWDN* 30 Mar. 1885. "Jemmy" may be a misprint of "Lenny" i.e. Lennard Stokes.
[9] *SWDN* 11 Jan. 1897.

> game" played throughout England. We are a proud, if not pig-headed nation, but we will show wisdom even at this late hour by copying the superior method of our conquerors.[10]

That contagion was the basis of Wales' great successes in the first "Golden Era" of the 1900s and it did indeed eventually spread throughout the rugby world. This, therefore, is probably Cardiff's greatest contribution to the game.

It is no exaggeration to claim that these events in Cardiff eventually brought about a revolution in the way rugby was played. It led to the demise of the forward-dominated mauling game in which passes were made only infrequently. For the first time, it handed the attacking thrust to the backs, who had previously played a largely defensive tackling or kicking role. Some have suggested that one of the reasons why association began to eclipse rugby – at least in England – in the late nineteenth century was its greater fluidity compared to the more static handling code.[11] But this ignores how dramatically rugby changed after 1885. It was in Wales, and in Cardiff in particular, that these changes were first put into practice and exploited so well. There is little doubt that, in Cardiff *and* throughout south Wales, the new style of play created by Hancock's team greatly increased the popularity of rugby, both as a game to play and to watch.

Gwyn Nicholls, regarded by many as the greatest player of the era, wrote about its impact in 1908:

> [Rugby's] process of evolution has been very marked during the last twenty years. ... all clubs nowadays *combine* more or less ... The new idea was originated and its virtues first demonstrated by the Cardiff team, which, under the captaincy of ... F.E. Hancock, originated the four three-quarter game ... [it requires the] total merging of the player in the team. He is no longer even an unit, but rather an integral part of the whole.[12]

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[10] Quoted in *SWDN* 10 Jan. 1899.

[11] For instance, Dave Russell, *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1995* (Preston, 1997), p. 20.

The success and playing style of the club became matters of great pride to Cardiff's citizens and so rugby became an important part of the life of the town. It was, after all, the "Cardiff game". It is interesting too to note the extent to which Hancock's team typified the fast growing town. Though all of the seventeen leading players lived and worked in Cardiff, only nine were born in the locality. One came from Pembrokeshire and another from north Wales. Four were English by birth and two were Scots, while one Cardiff born player was a member of the town's large Irish community. A third of the team was working-class. The players were also substantially products of a local club system which flourished spectacularly during the late nineteenth century. The composition of Hancock's team was, then, a reflection of Cardiff society. It was a team, therefore, with which most could identify and share in its success.

This study is concerned with many of the themes highlighted here: the growth in the number of clubs; the take-up of the game by working-class players; its socially inclusive nature; civic pride and the popularity of rugby; the wider impact of the game; and its contribution to local, civic and national consciousness.

A range of sources has been used to undertake this research. No relevant club records from the nineteenth century were traced, apart from an archive of press cuttings, fixture cards and handbooks held by Penarth RFC. The main primary source used, therefore, was local newspapers, in particular the *South Wales Daily News* and the *Western Mail*. These were published in Cardiff, with a "national" circulation. Therefore, as their coverage of rugby had both a Welsh and a Cardiff dimension, they were especially relevant and so were thoroughly interrogated from the late 1860s to 1900.[13] No previous study of rugby has made use of this source in such detail. Other newspapers were also used, where necessary, but were not as comprehensively researched.

As a research source, newspapers have their weaknesses and the historian has to use them with a degree of care. Reports may be subject to human error, false claims and bias and

[12] E. Gwyn Nicholls, *The Modern Game and How to Play It* (London, 1908), pp. 9-11.

these are rarely subsequently corrected. Their coverage is often variable and selective, with some topics left "hanging in the air". The reporting of sport was sometimes severely restricted by national events like royal deaths and the South African War. The impact of some of these issues on the research is further discussed in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, newspapers provide the most comprehensive record of nineteenth-century Welsh rugby and increasingly they came to articulate the local sporting culture. However, they did not merely *reflect* the sporting context: they also *contributed* to it. They often became directly involved in major disputes, like the Gould affair, and in the organisation of the game, for example, through the promotion of fixtures, the publication of teams and the establishment of local unions and cup competitions.[14]

Newspapers were complemented by a number of additional sources. Several contemporary football handbooks were found to be very informative. These are extremely rare and none used in this research is identified in Jenkins' authoritative compendium of rugby.[15] Another previously underused, yet highly informative, source, Alcock's *Football Annual*, was researched from 1868 to 1895. Other primary material included RFU and WFU minute books, as well as census returns, directories and compilations of biographies which were used to identify individuals and their social background.[16]

A wide range of books and articles and several academic theses were consulted, though there has been surprisingly little detailed and academic research into nineteenth-century Welsh rugby and virtually none at all at the level of a particular community. *Fields of Praise*, of course, was not only the inspiration for this study but was also an invaluable reference. Gareth Williams' *1905 and All That* usefully develops a number of its themes

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[13] The *Western Mail* was published from 1869 and the *South Wales Daily News* from 1872.
[14] For example, Alexander Duncan, a proprietor of the *SWDN*, was a Cardiff, WFU and IRB official. H.W. Wells ("Welsh Athlete") helped to establish the Cardiff and District FU, *WM* 19 Nov. 1892. The local union representing clubs in the East Glamorgan valleys was admitted to the WFU in 1901 under the title *Glamorgan Times* Junior League, WFU minutes 5 Sept. 1901.
[15] John M. Jenkins, (ed.), *A Rugby Compendium: An Authoritative Guide to the Literature of Rugby Union* (Boston Spa, 1998).
[16] Unfortunately, WFU minutes before 1892 no longer survive.

but the scope of neither book allows for an in-depth study at a local level in Wales.[17] Whilst many club histories were consulted, these tend to be celebratory in tone and they are sometimes poorly researched, especially in relation to the nineteenth century. Therefore, in general these were used cautiously and usually only where supporting evidence was available. There has been little research on the general history of rugby, though Tony Collins' *The Great Split* is an excellent study of the game, in the period covered in this thesis.[18] Whilst there have been several academic studies of soccer and cricket clubs at a local level, there has been little comparable work on rugby clubs, though Barlow's study of Rochdale is a notable exception.[19] Unfortunately, Martin Johnes' *Soccer and Society: South Wales, 1900-1939* deals with the period immediately following that of this research. However, Johnes and Garland's work on north-east Wales and Lile and Farmer's on south Wales are useful references on early Welsh soccer.[20]

The lack of any previous detailed research into rugby at a local level in Victorian Wales, therefore, provided an opportunity to undertake a study which contributes to knowledge in the history of sport and Wales. The research aims to investigate nineteenth-century Welsh rugby by concentrating on the nature of the game in one urban area. It begins with a study of the origins, and initial growth in popularity, of the game in Wales. This is then followed by an extensive investigation of rugby in Cardiff. This thesis, therefore, is the first in-depth study of its kind. The specific objectives are:

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[17] David Smith and Gareth Williams, *Fields of Praise: The Official History of the Welsh Rugby Union 1881-1981* (Cardiff, 1980); Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That.*

[18] Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (London, 1998).

[19] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* (Brighton, 1981), pp. 21, 24-31 draws on the work of Molyneux in Birmingham; Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 150-1 also draws on the research of Molyneux as well as that of Tranter on Stirling, Crump on Leicester and Rees on Liverpool; M. Huggins, 'The Spread of Association Football in North-East England, 1876-90: The Pattern of Diffusion', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 6, 3 (1989), pp. 299-318; Stuart Barlow, 'The Diffusion of 'Rugby' Football in the Industrialized Context of Rochdale, 1868-1890: A Conflict of Ethical Values', *IJHS*, 10, 1 (1993), pp. 49-67.

[20] Martin Johnes, *Soccer and Society: South Wales, 1900-1939* (Cardiff, 2002); Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, ' "The New Craze": football and society in north-east Wales, c1870-90', *Welsh History Review*, 22, 2 (2004), pp. 278-304; Brian Lile and David Farmer, 'The Early Development of Association Football in South Wales, 1890-1906', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, (1984), pp. 193-215.

In relation to Wales, up to the formation of the Welsh Football (Rugby) Union:

1 To explore in depth the introduction of rugby football to Wales.
2 To investigate the growth in popularity of the game and the emergence of a distinctive and competitive Welsh rugby culture.

In relation to Cardiff during the nineteenth century:

3 To assess the growth, extent and character of the club game, based on a comprehensive investigation of teams.
4 To examine the organisation and competitive structure of the game at a local level.
5 To investigate the arrival of the working class and the consequences of this.
6 To assess the wider impact of rugby on the urban culture.
7 To evaluate the contribution of Cardiff to the game.

In seeking to achieve these objectives, the first two chapters set out the context for the game in Cardiff by exploring the origins of rugby in Wales and its subsequent development as a popular sport, up to the formation of the Welsh Football (Rugby) Union in 1881. The following three chapters then concentrate on Cardiff, examining the extent and nature of the club game, how it was organised, who played and administered it and the impact which rugby had on the wider culture of the town.

Since contemporary sources invariably refer to "football" clubs rather than "rugby" clubs, this style is adopted throughout this thesis when discussing clubs and unions in the nineteenth century, for example, Cardiff Football Club and Welsh Football Union. Following the practice in south Wales during the study period, all references to association

football are qualified as "association" or "soccer".[21] In addition, as Cardiff did not receive city status city until 1905, it is described as a town in any reference before then.

[21] When the forerunners of Cardiff City were formed in 1899, they had to adopt the name "Riverside AFC", as the title "Riverside Football Club" was already being used by an established rugby club.

CHAPTER 1

'NEITHER DRIBBLING FISH NOR HANDLING FOWL': FROM FOOTBALL TO RUGBY[1]

The remarkable popularity of rugby in Victorian Cardiff did not occur in isolation. The first two chapters, therefore, establish the context for this phenomenon by exploring the introduction and consolidation of the game in Wales up to 1881, when the Welsh Football Union (WFU) was founded. They also highlight the hitherto unrecognised contribution which the town made to the earliest days of football in Wales. The approach adopted, in the first two chapters, is a largely narrative one, since they introduce some new material not used in previous studies of this formative period and this lends itself to a chronological treatment.

Within a few years, the rapid expansion of the coal industry transformed nineteenth-century Welsh society. It also dramatically transformed the country's sporting culture, for it was during this period of massive population growth, mainly the result of in-migration, that rugby football became the dominant sport in the south. In so doing, it helped to bind newcomers not only to their communities but also to their nation.

The arrival of rugby in Wales coincided with a period of extraordinary economic change. Between 1870 and 1914, south Wales became a centre of heavy industry of world significance. At no other time in its history was Wales more important to the British economy.[2] Though the expansion in steel and tin-plate production contributed to the spectacular growth experienced in this period, its main cause was the dramatic increase in the export-driven demand for Welsh coal. In 1840, Wales was producing four and a half million tons. By the 1870s, this had risen to sixteen million and by 1913 coal output

[1] David Smith and Gareth Williams, *Fields of Praise: The Official History of the Welsh Rugby Union 1881-1981* (Cardiff, 1980), p. 30.
[2] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford, 1982 edn.), p. 59.

reached fifty-seven million. The exploitation of steam coal in the Glamorgan and Monmouthshire valleys was well advanced by the 1880s but the continued expansion, largely due to the seemingly insatiable demand from the world's steam ships, was especially pronounced in the Rhondda. The anthracite areas of west Wales also saw an unprecedented expansion, mainly to meet domestic and commercial demands. By 1913, over half of all British coal exports passed through the ports of south Wales and there were over a quarter of a million men – almost one in three of the total labour force – employed in the industry.[3]

Initially, demand for labour was largely met from Wales itself, mainly by migration from the depressed countryside. Between 1851 and 1911, rural Wales experienced a net loss of population of 338,000: this was balanced by an inward migration into the south Wales coalfield of 366,000. From the 1890s, however, the migrants came increasingly from outside Wales, particularly from the west of England and the border counties.[4] By 1911, 49% of the population of the Glamorgan coalfields and 59% of Monmouthshire outside Newport were English by birth.[5]

During every decade after 1850, there was a net gain through migration in the populations of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire. As Smith and Williams argue, the massive migration into the area was highly significant as far as Welsh rugby is concerned. The industries of south Wales were labour intensive. Not only did coal have to be cut and steel and tin-plate manufactured, they also had to be transported to the ports and transferred to ships, while their export also had to be arranged through coal and shipping companies. Railway lines and port facilities had to be constructed. This required a new workforce which had to be housed and serviced and, as a consequence, new urban communities sprang up in the valley areas, while port towns like Swansea, Newport and Cardiff expanded dramatically. This

[3] Morgan, *Rebirth*, pp. 60-7; D. Gareth Evans, *A History of Wales 1815-1906* (Cardiff, 1989), pp. 177-189; Chris Williams, *Capitalism, Community and Conflict: The South Wales Coalfield, 1898-1947* (Cardiff, 1998), p. 11.
[4] Morgan, *Rebirth*, p. 7.
[5] Williams, *Capitalism, Community and Conflict*, p. 69.

newly urbanised population also had to be entertained and it was here that rugby football had a special contribution to make.[6]

Rugby came late to Wales, though not quite so late as originally suggested by Dunning and Sheard.[7] By the 1860s, clubs playing according to rules based on those deriving from Rugby School had been established not only in England but also in Scotland, Ireland and even Australia. However, it was only during the following decade that the Rugby School code began to have any noticeable impact in Wales, though there is evidence that sporadic games of hybrid "football" were being played across south Wales before then.

Macrory shows that the increasing numbers of pupils attending Rugby School by the 1840s meant that the customary practice of communicating the rules by word of mouth was no longer practical. Thus, in August 1845, the boys produced, in printed booklet form, the first written rules of football: "Laws of Football Played at Rugby School". These were regularly updated and the revised rule book of 1862 was the first produced for the benefit of all players, whether at Rugby School or not. By the early 1860s, the handling game was expanding and demand for the rules was coming from emerging clubs, like Blackheath, Richmond, Liverpool and Manchester; from the universities; and from other public schools, like Marlborough, Cheltenham, Clifton, Haileybury and Wellington.[8] In Ireland, the first laws were drawn up in Trinity College Dublin in the 1860s by an Old Rugbeian. In Scotland, public schools and clubs were playing a form of rugby by the 1850s and in 1868 Edinburgh Academy drew up the "Laws of Football As Played by the Principal Clubs in Scotland". Thorburn claims that the first Scotland v England international match in 1871 may have been played under these laws.[9]

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[6] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, pp. 28-9.
[7] Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (Oxford, 1979 edn.), p. 223. Placing the origin of the game in the 1890s was a typographical error according to the second edition (London, 2005) of this work, p. 248.
[8] Jennifer Macrory, *Running with the Ball: The Birth of Rugby Football* (London, 1991), pp. 86-101; Graham Curry, Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, 'Sociological Versus Empiricist History: Some Comments on Tony Collins's 'History, Theory and the Civilizing "Process"' ', *Sport in History*, 26, 1 (2006), pp. 116-117.
[9] Edmund Van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby 1874-1999: A History* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 10-12; A.M.C. Thorburn, *The Scottish Rugby Union: Official History* (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 1-3; Sandy Thorburn, *The History of Scottish Rugby* (London, 1980), pp. 9-16.

However, it would be a mistake to assume that all clubs and schools in the 1860s played to a common set of laws.[10] The *Football Annual* of 1868 lists the differences between the varieties of football being played then and it is clear that there were many variations, even between those playing a broadly similar type of football. Nevertheless, for those who preferred a handling game, it was the Rugby School rules which provided the substance and much of the terminology for the first set of laws drawn up by the RFU in 1871 and which became universally adopted soon after. The RFU minutes confirm this in their description of the laws as "Football Rules ... based upon the Rugby system of play".[11]

It, therefore, has to be borne in mind that, before the mid 1870s, clubs did not *necessarily* adhere to any single set of rules. It was common practice to adopt local variations, or compromise on rules, or even play under other codes. Harvey shows that Richmond, for example, during five weeks in 1863-4, played Forest under Cambridge rules, Barnes under those of the FA and Blackheath under rugby rules. It should also be pointed out that during the 1860s to 1880s, it was by no means certain that association would eventually become the dominant version of football in Britain. According to Collins, for instance, rugby "towered" over soccer in the north during the 1870s.[12] The question frequently posed therefore by sports historians, "Why rugby in Wales?" might be responded to with another, "Why not?"

Whilst football has ancient and popular roots, this research does not enter into any investigation or debate about the origins of the game of rugby football itself. As Smith and Williams argue in relation to the game in Wales:

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[10] Blackheath, for instance, produced its own set of laws in 1862 which are shown in Nigel Starmer-Smith, *Rugby – A Way of Life: An Illustrated History of Rugby*, p. 15.
[11] *Football Annual* 1868 pp. 55-75; RFU minutes 26 Jan. 1871.
[12] Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (London, 1998), pp. 11-12, 37; Tony Collins, 'History, Theory and the "Civilizing Process"', *Sport in History*, 25, 2 (2005), pp. 291-6; Adrian Harvey, ''An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport': Football in Sheffield and the Creation of Modern Soccer and Rugby', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 18, 4 (2001), p. 69.

> Bloodhounds roaming the centuries on the scent of the pedigree of Welsh rugby ... have detected a number of exiting aromas, but they have managed to establish little more than that ball games have been a feature of the Welsh countryside for well over a millennium.[13]

As elsewhere in the British Isles, the existence of an earlier popular tradition of folk football may partly explain why rugby was eventually adopted readily and widely in Wales, particularly by the working class. Collins refers to this as a "residual consciousness of older forms of football".[14] Gouldstone argues that more sophisticated versions, some involving handling, were already being played by the working class in the first half of the century. There has recently been some debate in academic circles about the significance of such early, non-public school football.[15] It is possible that the eventual adoption of rugby in Wales was the result of a convergence of such working-class football with the public school game, though little evidence for it has so far emerged. Smith and Williams refer to cnappan as the most plausible forebear of Welsh rugby, with which it shared some "striking similarities". "It engendered a vigorous community involvement and fierce inter-village rivalry; it was a game of throwing, tackling and kicking".[16]

Adaptations of cnappan or folk football may have been practised well into the nineteenth century. In the 1870s, there are reports of parish football games still being played at Christmas near Cowbridge; whilst Shrove Tuesday football took place in the streets of Narberth as late as 1884. As Holt points out, when football was taken up in the industrial

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[13] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 17.
[14] Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*, p. 4.
[15] John Gouldstone, 'The Working-Class Origins of Modern Football', *IJHS*, 17, 1 (2000), pp. 135-147; Harvey, 'An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport', *IJHS*, 18, 4 (2001), 53-87; Eric Dunning, 'Something of a Curate's Egg: Comments on Adrian Harvey's "An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport" ', *IJHS*, 18, 4 (2001), 88-94; Adrian Harvey, 'The Curate's Egg Put Back Together: Comments on Eric Dunning's Response to "An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport" ', *IJHS*, 19, 4 (2002), 192-9; Eric Dunning and Graham Curry , 'The Curate's Egg Scrambled Again: Comments on "The Curate's Egg Put Back Together"!', *IJHS*, 19, 4, (2002), 200-204; Adrian Harvey, 'Curate's Egg Pursued by Red Herrings: A Reply to Eric Dunning and Graham Curry', *IJHS*, 21, 1 (2004), 127-131.
[16] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 18.

areas, it was often played in a way which might have been recognised by participants in an earlier version of folk football. Old rivalries too could be sustained through the new game.[17]

However, although there may have also been a tradition of earlier folk football involving handling in Scotland and Ireland, it was predominantly pupils and masters – both returning locals and newcomers – from English rugby playing schools who introduced the codified version of the handling game there. In addition, it was through public schools and universities, crucially located in the main urban centres, that rugby was eventually introduced to a wider Scottish and Irish public.[18]

The comparatively late arrival of rugby in Wales may, therefore, be partly explained by the absence of any large public schools and universities in the main centres of population at this time. The three public schools in south Wales were all located in rural areas – Llandovery, Brecon and Monmouth – and were small compared to their English and Scottish counterparts. Between the founding of the school in 1848 and 1875, for instance, there were never more than eighty boys at Llandovery. By 1875 the numbers had declined to forty, whilst Christ College Brecon had fewer than a hundred boys in the years before 1881. Cheltenham, on the other hand, had over 600 pupils as early as 1858.[19] In addition, Monmouth and Brecon did not formally adopt rugby until the middle of the 1870s by which time the game was starting to develop in Wales. Indeed, rather than initiating rugby in Wales, they may have taken up it up because it was already beginning to be played locally. It is possible, then, that the contribution of these Welsh public schools to the *introduction* of rugby may not have been as crucial as is sometimes claimed, whilst private and grammar schools may have had a greater influence on the adoption of the game in Wales than is

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[17] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 18; *Western Mail* 30 Dec. 1875, 30 Dec. 1879 (Cowbridge); Martin Johnes, *A History of Sport in Wales* (Cardiff, 2005), p. 9 (Narberth); Richard Holt, 'Working-Class Football and the City: The Problem of Continuity', *British Journal of Sports History*, 3, 1 (1986), p. 5.
[18] Thorburn, *Official History*, pp. 1-4; Thorburn, *History of Scottish Rugby*, pp. 6-16, 323-6; Van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, pp. 1-24.
[19] D.I. Gealy, 'Sport at Llandovery: Rugby Football' in R. Brinley Jones (ed.), *Floreat Landubriense: Celebrating a Century and a Half of Education at Llandovery College* (Llandovery, 1998), p. 242; Danny James and P.O.J. Rowlands, *Brecon Rugby Football Club: One Hundred Years of Rugby Football 1879-1979* (Brecon, 1979), p. 15; Timothy J.L. Chandler, 'Games at Oxbridge and the Public Schools, 1830-1880: The Diffusion of an Innovation', *IJHS*, 8, 2 (1991), p. 181.

often acknowledged. On the other hand, as will be shown, all three south Wales public schools were playing forms of football before the 1870s and this perhaps matters more in terms of their influence than their formal adoption of a specific code. For instance, several prominent members of the successful early Newport XV had played a hybrid game, closer to association, at Monmouth before the school adopted rugby.

There were no universities in Wales until Aberystwyth was founded in 1872 – again a small institution located well away from the urban centres – and Cardiff in 1883. The only higher education establishments which did contribute to the early game in south Wales were St. David's College Lampeter and Carmarthen Training College, both situated in rural Wales. There were no large urban equivalents of Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities, both founder members of the Scottish Football Union, or of Trinity College Dublin (1854) and Sydney University (1864), both of which were the first clubs in their respective countries.[20]

That Wales had a smaller middle and upper class was another contributory factor. There were relatively fewer former public school and university men returning home bearing rugby balls and copies of the laws. Nevertheless, it would appear that it *was* these men who were eventually instrumental in bringing the game to Wales. This happened not only across Britain but also throughout the rugby world. It is no co-incidence that a swathe of rugby playing public schools is found in and around the west country and many affluent south Wales families sent their sons to institutions such as Marlborough, Cheltenham, Hereford, Clifton, Sherborne and Blundell's. Old boys from these, as well as Rugby School itself, of course, were involved in early Welsh rugby. This is an example of what Tranter terms "proximity to the culture hearth". A similar process appears to have happened in north-east Wales, where, as Johnes and Garland show, it was old boys of Shrewsbury School who played a key role in introducing soccer there. This is consistent with Russell's work on the

[20] Thorburn, *Official History*, p. 4; Van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, pp.15-16; Jack Pollard, *Australian Rugby: The Game and the Players* (Chippendale, Australia, 1994), pp. 21-5.

spatial differences in the preference for rugby or soccer in Yorkshire and Lancashire, where he found that this depended at least partly on the schools which the local elite attended.[21]

Macrory writes that west country public schools were "sending out players in force by the 1870s" and argues that the subsequent popularity of rugby in that region is attributable to this. It is now a commonplace that the Welsh game was stimulated by an influx of rugby playing migrants from the west of England.[22] With regard to public school men, there is much truth in this and, indeed, Macrory agrees: "The west-country schools supplied much of the early support for the game in South Wales". But as far as ordinary *club* players are concerned, this may need qualification. A study of the founding dates of west country clubs reveals that very few were formed much before the early 1870s. Therefore, the likelihood that many experienced *club* players from that region were involved in the *introduction* of rugby to Wales cannot have been that great. On the other hand, there is absolutely no doubt that from the later 1870s onwards their contribution to the *evolution* of the Welsh game was significant.[23]

The official historians of the WRU place the first incursion of rugby into Wales in the rural west, following the arrival of Rowland Williams as vice-principal at St. David's College Lampeter in 1850. He was a contemporary at Cambridge of Albert Pell, the Rugbeian who is credited by some with introducing rugby to Cambridge in 1839. In 1858, Williams encouraged his students to take up "healthful exercise", including football. Initially, internal games were played but from the mid 1860s, "foreign" matches of an undefined football nature took place against school teams, in particular Llandovery. By the 1870s, when club rugby was beginning to take a firm hold, Lampeter College had one of the strongest teams

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[21] Macrory, *Running with the Ball,* pp. 197-205; Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain, 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 30; Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, ' "The New Craze": football and society in north-east Wales, c1870-90', *Welsh History Review,* 22, 2 (2004), pp. 279-280; David Russell, ''Sporadic and Curious': The Emergence of Rugby and Soccer Zones in Yorkshire and Lancashire, c 1860-1914', *IJHS,* 5, 2 (1988), p. 194.

[22] For example, Martin Johnes, *History of Sport in Wales,* p. 24.

[23] Macrory, *Running with the Ball,* pp. 83, 192-3; Uel A. Titley and Ross McWhirter, *Centenary History of the Rugby Football Union* (London, 1970), pp. 202-4. This lists the foundation dates of all the clubs in membership of the RFU in 1970. Only Bath (1865), Cirencester (1866) and Cirencester College (1868) were

in Wales, reaching the South Wales Cup final on one occasion. The College were also founder members of the WFU.[24]

An account of rugby at Llandovery College, published in 1949, maintained that "football of a sort" was "probably" played there in the 1850s, while Gealy refers to a claim that the first game between Llandovery and Lampeter was played as early as 1856, though there is no contemporary evidence for this. He also mentions an account by a Breconian, probably J.A. Parry-Price mentioned below, who recalled playing against Llandovery at some time between 1864 and 1867. Smith and Williams' suggestion that these early matches were "a hybrid game" is confirmed by evidence relating to the introduction of formal rugby rules at Llandovery. [25]

After teaching at Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh, W.P. Whittington took up a post at Llandovery in 1868. In a letter written thirty years later, he described how he introduced rugby there soon after arriving. He referred to the game it replaced as "a *sort* of Association without definite rule", though the *Llandovery School Journal* in 1926 claimed that rugby was "easily adopted" in the 1870s "because the old Rugby game had for years been played". Since Whittington arrived at Llandovery before the RFU's codification of the laws in 1871, it is possible that those initially adopted by the college were based on the 1868 "*Laws of Football As Played by the Principal Clubs in Scotland*". [26]

Whittington's account illustrates the way in which the early game was spread, in this case by schoolmasters from England via Scotland and eventually to Wales. Rugby was adopted

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formed before 1870. Reference to clubs in the early minutes of the RFU and editions of the *Football Annual* confirm the general point.

[24] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, pp. 22-3; D.T.W. Price, *A History of Saint David's University College Lampeter, Volume One: To 1898* (Cardiff, 1977), p. 152; Macrory, *Running with the Ball*, p. 142.

[25] *WM* 1 July 1949; Gealy, 'Sport at Llandovery', pp. 241-3; see also H.A. Harris, *Sport in Britain: Its Origins and Development* (London, 1975), pp. 132-3; Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 23.

[26] Jones, *Floreat Llandubriense*, p.48 (letter); *WM* 28 July 1898 (Whittington introduces rugby); W. Gareth Evans, *A History of Llandovery College* (Llandovery, 1981), p. 70 (Journal); Thorburn, *History of Scottish Rugby*, pp. 14-16.

at Merchiston in 1858-9, at which time there were three masters at the school who had had contact with rugby in England, including one who had taught at Cheltenham.[27]

The evidence provided by Whittington, then, appears to confirm Llandovery College as one of the first rugby playing organisations in Wales. It is likely that Lampeter formally adopted rugby laws at around the same time, though Evans claims a college club was formed as early as 1866.[28] Like Lampeter, Llandovery College were founder members of the WFU and they competed in the early years of the South Wales Cup. However, though Llandoverians were frequently found in the ranks of many of the first Welsh clubs and international teams, their strongest influence on the early game may have been in providing good regular opposition for the newly emerging teams.

Harris' study of Breconshire soccer notes a very early mention of football at Christ College Brecon in 1861, when six schoolboys challenged any six gentlemen from the town to a game. It would be some years, however, before the College would formally adopt rugby. J.A. Parry-Price, who had been at Brecon in the second half of the 1860s, recalled in 1931 that "Our football was somewhat feeble, the game played being a kind of soccer, but with no very stringent rules with regard to hands or offside." [29]

Swansea Grammar School is recorded as playing football in March 1865 when they took on Kilvey. Farmer also refers to a match played by the Grammar School against twelve gentlemen of the town in 1871.[30] An early match between a Bridgend School XIV and R. Randall's VIII took place in 1866. The school won by 3 goals to 1:

> due in great measure to the general good play and "charging" of Messrs Green, E.S. Thomas and W.W. Thomas. Messrs. E.F. Blosse, T.A. Rees and A.W. Stockwood

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[27] Thorburn, *History of Scottish Rugby,* pp. 10-12.
[28] Kenneth Evans, 'A Historical Study of the Formative Years of the Welsh Rugby Union 1870-1900' (M.Ed. thesis, University of Liverpool, 1981), p. 73.
[29] Jonathan Harris, 'The Early History of Association Football in Breconshire', *Brycheiniog*, XXVII, (1996), p. 128. Harris quotes the *Brecon Journal* of 28 Mar. 1861 drawing on the earlier work of J.R. Boulton, 1969, *Brecon Football 1860-1880* (Brecon, 1969).
[30] A.L. Evans, 'Some Reflections on Local Sport', *Port Talbot History Society Transactions*, 13, 2 (1981), pp. 22-49; David Farmer, *The Life and Times of Swansea R.F.C.: The All Whites* (Swansea, 1995), p. 1.

> also contributed ... For the "eight", Messrs. R. Randall, R.C. Blosse, T.J. Morgan and P. Llewellin, worked hard and well; the first gentleman distinguishing himself in the "squashes". The disparity of numbers was counterbalanced by the prestige of the public school men playing with the "eight." [31]

The reference to "the public school men" playing football in south Wales at this early time is instructive. Twelve year old E.F. Blosse later attended Marlborough, so perhaps his older brother, R.C. Blosse, of the public school "eight", was at this prominent rugby school at the time. Edward Blosse later became a member of the Cardiff club during 1877-8. The references to "charging" and "squashes" may also imply that the game was a version of rugby, but it cannot be claimed that this provides conclusive proof. It *is* known, however, that Bridgend School had adopted rugby by the early 1870s. Welsh international, W.D. Phillips, learned the game there and, when he retired in April 1885, he claimed to have played for fourteen years, suggesting he first played at the school in 1870-1. There are also newspaper reports of the school playing rugby by 1872. Bridgend was a boarding and day school, which prepared boys for the public schools, professions and commerce. Sport was an important part of the curriculum. The boys received "every encouragement in Manly Exercises" and were provided with a "Gymnasium and a large Cricket Ground." If most of the boys being prepared for public school went on to those in the west country, then it would be reasonable to suppose that rugby became the preferred sport at Bridgend from an early date.[32]

The contribution of the military – garrisons, volunteers and military academies – in introducing the game to Wales has not previously been explored. Hignell reveals that the presence of military units helped to stimulate interest in cricket in south east Wales during the 1840s. According to Campbell, RMA Woolwich was playing rugby by 1860 and the

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[31] *Bridgend Chronicle* 26 Jan. 1866.

[32] W.T. Pike (ed.), *Glamorgan Contemporary Biographies: Pike's New Century Series No. 20* (Brighton, 1907), p. 156 (Blosse); C.S. Arthur, *The Cardiff Rugby Football Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1906* (Cardiff, 1908), p. 21 (Blosse); *SWDN* 13 Apr. 1885 (Phillips); *SWDN* 29 Nov. 1872; *Webster and Co.'s Postal and Commercial Directory of the City of Bristol and Counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth* (London, 1865), p. 40 (Bridgend School).

sport became popular in the Army during the 1870s.[33] The armed services were also influential in spreading the game throughout the world, including Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There is some, admittedly limited, evidence of their early involvement in Wales. Between 1867 and 1869, the Royal Welch Fusiliers (RWF) were stationed at Newport, Brecon and Cardiff. As it happens, these were all centres of early Welsh football.[34]

In 1868, the RWF participated in perhaps the earliest ever football match at the Arms Park. This is also an early example of the influence of cricket on football in Wales.[35] Again, there is no certainty about the form of football played, but "scrimmages" suggests that it might have been a more robust version.

> Yesterday the first match of football played upon the Cardiff Arms field, took place between a picked eleven of the Cardiff and Canton Cricket Clubs and fifteen of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers headed by Lieutenant Patterson and Ensign Gilbert ... After about two hours of spirited play, the match resulted in a draw, neither party being able to effect a go [sic] kick, though the 23rd had decidedly the best of the match. Lieutenant Patterson was very conspicuous in the "scrimmages"... Messrs. Jones and Yorath on the Cardiff side, did their party good service, as did also Mr. Peter Robinson, of the Free Library.[36]

The match clearly aroused local interest, for another was immediately arranged for the 28th March and this too was duly reported:

> at the Cardiff Arms Park, the largest number of spectators we remember having seen present at any sports, watched the game throughout with unflagging interest ... when time was called, the victory remained undecided, though, in the opinion of the

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[33] Andrew K. Hignell, *A 'Favourit' Game: Cricket in south Wales before 1914* (Cardiff, 1992), pp. 38-42; J.D. Campbell, ' "Training for Sport is Training for War": Sport and the Transformation of the British Army, 1860-1914', *IJHS*, 17, 4 (2000), pp. 33-4.

[34] Macrory, *Running with the Ball* , pp. 203-5; Titley and McWhirter, *Centenary History Rugby Football Union*, p. 94; Pollard, *Australian Rugby*, p. 21; Rowland Broughton-Mainwaring, *Historical Record of the Royal Welch Fusiliers* (London, 1889), pp. 259-261; A.D.L. Cary and S. Stouppe McLance, *Regimental Records of the Royal Welch Fusiliers Volume II 1816-1914* (London, 1923), pp. 137-9.

[35] Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That: Essays on Rugby Football, Sport and Welsh Society* (Llandysul, 1991), p. 129 (cricket and football). Cardiff Cricket Club had been formed a year earlier. See W. Alan Thomas, *Cardiff Cricket Club: 1867-1967* (Cardiff, 1967), p. 13.

[36] *Bridgend Chronicle* 20 Mar. 1868.

> majority of the spectators, the Cardiff Football Club might well have claimed Mr. Heath's first kick as a clear "goal" ... For especially good play amongst the Fusiliers, we may mention Ensign Gilbert, Private Astbury, and Glass, each of whom gained a "touch down" ... For the club, first praise is due to Mr. Bassett Jones, while the play of Messrs. Hutchins, Rhys Jones, and Bell, were deservedly admired. The "touch downs" for the club were gained by the last two players.[37]

The references to touch downs may provide a further clue about the type of football played. That the match attracted the largest ever sporting crowd to the Arms Park clearly anticipated the hold which rugby was to have in later decades on the public of both Cardiff and Wales. Whether the cricketers actually formed a "Cardiff Football Club", however, must remain an open question, in the absence of any further evidence.

No record of any further games played by the RWF has yet been traced, though it is quite likely that they played other unrecorded matches, including against the Newport club, which was in existence in 1867-8. What is certain is that RWF officers played for this Newport team while stationed there.

Though no direct link between the RWF and Brecon has yet been established, it may be no coincidence that the Brecon club, perhaps the oldest in Wales, existed by 1868. James and Rowlands reveal that the local press that year reported a game between a Brecon thirteen and twelve "gentlemen" from Abergavenny, who won by a drop-kick, suggesting they played a form of rugby. There were also newspaper references to the club in 1868-9, including details of their renting the cricket field, so they evidently enjoyed some degree of permanence at that time.[38] In October 1872, Brecon arranged a match with the 94th Regiment, though bad weather prevented it from being played. [39] That Brecon was a garrison town may therefore have had as much to do with the origins of football there as the location of Christ College, which did not formally adopt rugby until the mid 1870s.

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[37] *Bridgend Chronicle* 3 Apr. 1868.
[38] James and Rowlands, *Brecon Rugby*, pp. 11-14, quote from the *Brecon and County Times.*
[39] *SWDN* 23 Nov. 1872.

Other military organisations which helped to spread rugby later during the 1870s and 1880s were local rifle and artillery volunteer corps. The Cardiff based 10th Glamorgan Rifle Volunteers (GRV), for instance, were an early club which participated in the South Wales Cup and were the first team to play against Newport at Rodney Parade. Volunteers in Swansea, Neath, Newport and Aberdare all had rugby teams from time to time. It seems that many of the first players in Wales were also Volunteers and there are a number of reports of matches between Volunteers and "Civilians". When Cardiff drew 10th GRV in the 1878-9 Cup, they forbad any of their Volunteer members from playing for their opponents. Collins notes the contribution which Volunteers made to early organised football in the north of England, while Jackson argues that an opportunity to participate in sport was one of the motives for enlisting in the Volunteers in rural areas. In rural Wales, both Breconshire and Builth Volunteers played occasional games.[40]

During 1913, W.J. Townsend Collins, under his pseudonym "Dromio", wrote a series of articles in the *South Wales Argus* about the history of Newport rugby club. In these, he drew on reports in the *Monmouthshire Merlin* relating to three football matches played by an earlier Newport club against Abergavenny between November 1867 and March 1868. In the last of these, three RWF officers played for Newport. Abergavenny apparently also drew on players from a local training establishment for the army and navy. "Dromio" was initially convinced that the game played was a close relative of rugby, citing fifteen aside teams, and references to "dodging" and "running". He might also have mentioned that Abergavenny forced "the Newport side to touch the ball behind their own goal".[41]

"Dromio" was able to speak to several participants in these matches. Two assured him that the game they played *was* rugby. Conversely, another informed him that it was "chiefly a dribbling game, and that the players were not allowed to pick up the ball on the run; but

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[40] W.J. Townsend Collins (ed.), *Newport Athletic Club: The record of half a Century 1875-1925* (Newport, 1925), p. 14 (GRV); *WM* 2 Dec. 1878 (Cardiff and GRV); Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*, pp. 7-8; Lorna Jackson, 'Patriotism or Pleasure? The Nineteenth Century Volunteer Force as a Vehicle for Rural Working-Class Male Sport', *Sports Historian,* 19, 1 (1999), p. 137.

[41] For a brief biography of Townsend Collins see Meic Stephens (ed.), *New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), p.117.

that they *could* run from a catch from an opponent's kick, or from a pass by the foot to the hands on the part of a fellow player ... a player could be tripped or hacked over." "Dromio" was later contacted by an old Newport FC player, who said that he had played a hybrid game himself at Monmouth, before the school adopted rugby. Although he did not participate in the Newport-Abergavenny matches, he suggested that the game may have been more closely related to association and that it was essentially football "without a qualifying title". "The object of the game was to score a goal by kicking the ball between the posts and there was no cross bar. No try could be scored. But players could handle the ball *and run* if they could catch direct from an opponent's or a comrade's kick (without the ball touching the ground)." Reluctantly, "Dromio" came to the conclusion was that it was a hybrid game, with elements of both rugby and association.[42] Therefore, whilst it is not possible to argue with any conviction that these games were "rugby", neither can they be used as evidence that association pre-dated rugby in south Wales, as claimed by one frequently cited article on early Welsh soccer.[43] Touch downs were abolished by the FA in 1867, whilst running with the ball and hacking had been distinctly outlawed by the first FA laws of December 1863:

> Law 9. No player shall carry the ball.
> Law 10. Neither tripping nor hacking shall be allowed, and no player shall use his hands to hold or push an adversary.

Whatever rules the games were played under, they were not those of the Football Association. [44]

In their history of Pontypool RFC, Donovan and others, drawing on reports from *The Free Press of Monmouthshire*, show that at the end of their 1868 season, local cricketers discussed "taking up physical activities during the winter months to keep fit". Two of the

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[42] *South Wales Argus* 4, 11 Oct. 1913 (italics added); Townsend Collins, *Newport Athletic*, p. 10.
[43] Brian Lile and David Farmer, 'The Early Development of Association Football in South Wales, 1890-1906', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, (1984), p.195. The authors, who provide no source, claim that handling was not allowed in the 1867 Newport-Abergavenny game, but "Dromio" clearly established that running with the ball *was* allowed.
[44] Geoffrey Green, *The History of the Football Association* (London, 1953), pp. 36-8 (FA laws 1863); Harvey, 'An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport', p. 67; Macrory, *Running with the Ball*, pp. 171-180.

main proponents were Arthur and Herbert James, the sons of the Rector of Panteg. Both were educated at Shrewsbury School (where association was played) and Oxford. By October 1868, the cricketers had formed a football club and played their first match. The club drew up its own rules which were a mixture of rugby and association. Donovan and others suggest that Pontypool's early matches were closer to association. This was confirmed by this research with the discovery of the club's entry in the 1871 *Football Annual* which describes Pontypool as playing a "modification of association". It is tempting to speculate whether this modification might have involved *some* handling, particularly as a report of a fixture against Panteg in *The Free Press* in January 1870 criticised the Pontypool players for frequently using their hands to stop the ball and push it along the ground before kicking it. In October 1871 a fixture with the Tredegarville club of Cardiff was announced but, since this club played both association and rugby at this time, it is not known which version was played. Not until 12th October 1875 did Pontypool formally adopt rugby union laws, though that is not to say, of course, that they did experiment with rugby before that date.[45]

Grigg's history of Trinity College Carmarthen reveals that the vice-principal and acting principal between 1868 and 1870 was Reverend Francis Marshall. Without providing any evidence, he suggests that Marshall was instrumental in bringing rugby to Carmarthen. Given Marshall's influential place in rugby football, this seems credible. However, at a college alumni dinner in Leeds in 1892, one speaker referred to Marshall's taking "a very active part in cricket, forming a college club which has existed ever since", but significantly no reference was made to his setting up a rugby club. Carmarthen Training College was indeed one of Wales's earliest rugby clubs but it does not appear regularly in the press until 1876-7, several years after Marshall had left.[46]

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[45] Edward Donovan, Arthur Crane, Allan Smith and John Harris, *Pontypool's Pride: The Official History of Pontypool Rugby Football Club 1868-1988* (Abertillery, 1988), pp. 28-31; *Football Annual,* 1871 p. 66, 1872 p. 65, 1873 p. 77.

[46] Russell Grigg, *History of Trinity College Carmarthen 1848-1998* (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 197-8; *WM* 5 Mar. 1892.

The sporadic, casual and hybrid nature of football in the 1860s in south Wales – "neither dribbling fish nor handling fowl" [47] – gradually began to give way during the following decade to a more organised form, played according to a recognised set of rules, in particular those of the RFU, which became standard in Wales from the early 1870s. It was during this decade that Wales began to undergo the transformation in sporting culture which was experienced by the whole of Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was partly the result, as Tranter points out, of improved transport and communications, shorter working hours and higher wages.[48] In south Wales, the 1870s was a period of significant growth in organised rugby. By the end of the decade, not only were many of the Welsh public playing and watching the game regularly, but the social composition of the sport's participants was beginning to widen.

The 1871 *Football Annual* provides the first conclusive contemporary evidence of a club playing according to rugby laws anywhere in Wales. This lists "Tredegarville (Cardiff)" as having been founded in 1870 with a membership of fifty and playing at Sophia Gardens. It may be significant that the club took the name of a small exclusive area of high status housing rather than that of Roath, the suburb in which it was situated. The secretary was C. Prior of "Lansdowne", Tredegarville. He is described in Arthur's history of Cardiff RFC as a teacher at Monkton House. This was a private school, located in "Lansdowne". Arthur adds that the Tredegarville club was comprised mainly of old boys. The club played in an expensive outfit of blue and white jerseys, white flannel trousers and blue velvet cap with white silk tassel. These facts then give a strong indication of the likely social background of these early players. The *Football Annual* records Tredegarville as playing *both* rugby and association. Such an arrangement was not unusual at the time and several clubs were listed in early *Football Annuals* as playing under a variety of rules. An intriguing report in the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* records Tredegarville's match with the "Cardiff Club" at Sophia Gardens on 21st December 1870, which they won by two goals and four rouges. "Rouges" refers to touch downs and since they were abolished by the FA in 1867, this brief report perhaps records the earliest club rugby match played in Wales. The status of the

[47] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 30.

"Cardiff Club" is unknown but the entries in the *Football Annual* of 1871, 1872 and 1873 not only show that Tredegarville had some degree of permanence but they also provide the earliest *contemporary* evidence of an established Welsh club playing rugby. The discovery of the existence of this club at such an early time throws an entirely fresh light on the importance of Cardiff as a potential crucible for the early game in Wales.[49]

The Cowbridge Grammar School history is vague about exactly when rugby was introduced there. *Fields of Praise* says it happened in the early 1870s and this may be confirmed by a press report of a football match played on 26th October 1871 between the Grammar School and Cowbridge Gentlemen. Shortly afterwards, on 8th November 1871, Shewbrook's Club played the Science and Arts Club at the Arms Park. The *Western Mail* provides no indication of the variety of football but there is some circumstantial evidence to suggest that it may have been a form of rugby. The headmaster of the Science and Arts School (later to evolve by many steps into Cardiff University) was James Bush, who also taught at Monkton House, and who was the father of Percy Bush. Henry Shewbrook was the headmaster of Monkton House, which was often known by his name during the 1870s. Both men were keen rugby players and turned out frequently for the school team. Shewbrook, whose contribution to Welsh rugby has been largely over-looked, was born in Taunton and educated at London University and was probably a rugby player when he came to Cardiff to open his school. He was described on a number of occasions as the father of Welsh rugby and his obituary in 1905 claimed he "was largely instrumental in introducing rugby into South Wales". Whilst this may be an exaggeration, it perhaps confirms that Monkton House was crucial in the establishment of rugby in Cardiff at the very least, if not in the whole of Wales. Elsewhere this season, cricketers in Gwent were reported to have formed a football club at Tredegar.[50]

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[48] Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society,* pp. 13, 32-6.

[49] *Football Annual* 1871 p. 69, 1872 p. 66, 1873 p. 80; Andrew K. Hignell, 'Suburban Development in North Cardiff, 1850-1919: A Case Study of the Pattern and Processes of Growth in the Parishes of Llanishen, Lisvane and Whitchurch' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, 1987), p. 168; Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby*, p. 9; *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* 24 Dec. 1870; Harvey, 'An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport', p. 78 (rouges).

[50] Iolo Davies, *"A Certaine Schoole": A History of the Grammar School at Cowbridge Glamorgan* (Cowbridge, 1967), p. 126; Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 23; *WM* 28 Oct. 1871(Cowbridge); 9

These events in Cardiff, Cowbridge and Tredegar all predate, therefore, the fixture between Neath and Swansea on the 3rd February 1872, which is generally regarded as the earliest press report of a Welsh rugby match. According to the *Swansea and Glamorgan Herald* of 7th February:

> On Saturday a match was witnessed between Swansea and Neath clubs. The interest displayed was very great, although the result was undecided, both parties claiming to be victors. [51]

It is this report on which Neath base their claim of being the oldest rugby club in Wales and "the birthplace of Welsh rugby", with a foundation date of 1871, even though the earliest reference to the club is in 1872. Neath claim priority over their opponents by arguing that Swansea did not formally adopt rugby until several years later. According to the club historian:

> As a result of that brief account, Neath are held to be the most senior of Welsh clubs ... because while the footballers of Swansea enjoyed a flirtation with the association game, the men of Neath stuck firmly with the rugger cause.[52]

This interpretation has never been seriously challenged and Neath's seniority is unquestioningly accepted throughout the game. However, since the match report gives no indication of the laws of football played that day, it fails to provide any evidence that the game *was* rugby. It is *possible* that it was played under hybrid or even association rules and the report, therefore, is no different from many of the earlier match accounts, already discussed. Furthermore, Matthews' history of Swansea claims that a later fixture against Neath in 1872 *was* played under association rules, revealing that Neath also continued to "flirt" with the round ball.[53] As has been shown, other clubs were playing football before

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Nov. 1871 (Shewbrook's); *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* 11 Nov. 1871 (Shewbrook's); Venessa Cunningham and John Goodwin, *Cardiff University: A Celebration* (Cardiff, 2001), pp. 16, 156-174; *WM* 2 Jan. 1905; *WM* 4 Nov. 1871 (Tredegar).

[51] Quoted in T. Dargavel, *Neath R.F.C. 1871-1971 Centenary Year* (Neath, 1971), p. [2]

[52] Mike Price, *Images of Sport: Neath RFC 1871-1945* (Stroud, 2002), pp. [7] -11.

[53] Brinley E. Matthews, *The Swansea Story: A History of the Swansea Rugby Football Club 1874-1968* (Swansea, 1968), p. 10.

February 1872 and, with no less proof, they might justifiably claim precedence over Neath. In the absence of further evidence, Neath's claim has to be viewed with some degree of scepticism, especially as there are no reports in the *Western Mail* or *SWDN* of matches involving the club until 1875-6 and they do not figure in the early fixture lists of Llanelli until 1877-8 or Cardiff and Newport until 1878-9. Neither do the Neath club histories refer to any subsequent matches until 1876-7.[54] Neath may well be the oldest rugby playing club in Wales, but more evidence than one brief match report from 1872 is required to prove it.

Whenever the club *was* formed, it is generally accepted that Neath's founders were members of the professional middle class. Smith and Williams say they comprised, "a consortium of ten: a doctor, a surveyor, a mining engineer and a veritable plague of solicitors, in the chamber of one of whose number ... the club's first meetings were held." These included Lewis Kempthorne, who had been at Llandovery and Thomas Whittington, who was educated at Merchiston and who was the first Welshman to play international rugby when he was capped by Scotland in 1873 when playing for Merchistonians.[55]

According to Matthews' history, Swansea was founded on 26th September 1872. Association matches were initially played, including one against Neath on 23rd November 1872. Swansea *formally* adopted the rugby code on 17th October 1874 but this does not *necessarily* mean that the club had not previously played some games of rugby. Indeed, an early history, published in 1892, only eighteen years after the event, claims that the first rugby match took place seven months earlier on 28th February 1874. Swansea's first rugby fixture was against Llandovery College and the school featured frequently on their fixture lists for some years afterwards, strongly suggesting that Llandoverians were closely involved in early days of the rugby club.[56]

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[54]Gareth Hughes, *The Scarlets: A History of Llanelli Rugby Football Club* (Llanelli, 1986), p. 13; Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby* , p. 24 ; Jack Davis, *One Hundred Years of Newport Rugby 1875-1975* (Risca, 1974), p.180; Dargavel, *Neath RFC*, p. [4]; Price, *Neath RFC*, p. 11.
[55] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 24; Thorburn, *History of Scottish Rugby*, p. 27 (Merchistonians).
[56] Matthews, *The Swansea Story*, p. 10; Farmer, *Swansea R.F.C.*, p. 1; *Cardiff Times* 1 Oct. 1892.

There are press reports of other games in 1872-3, involving Cowbridge Grammar School, Monkton House and Brecon. A match between Shewbrook's and Bridgend School resulted in a win for Bridgend by "2 goals and 4 points to nothing", the reference to points suggesting tries or touchdowns. By February 1873, a Llanelli club was in existence, playing internal matches at the New Park. The captain and founder was John Rogers, who was educated at Rugby School between 1863 and 1866 and was manager of a family tinplate works. The secretary David Williams was a solicitor's clerk. Consequently Llanelli RFC celebrated its centenary in 1972-3. However, this early club disbanded for, as the club's historian has since demonstrated, the present club was founded in November 1875, when Rogers was elected the first captain. The secretary was another Rugbeian, William Nevill, a member of a local family prominent in shipping and industry. [57]

During 1873-4, games of an uncertain nature were reported involving Christ College Brecon, Monmouth School, Brecon, Roath, Pontypridd, Swansea Collegiate School, Swansea Normal College and Arnold College Swansea. The Christ College matches were probably played under association type rules. Monmouth had previously played a hybrid "dribbling game in a somewhat casual way," according to H.W. Peill, the master who introduced rugby there in November 1873 and who, as was common practice, turned out for them against adult teams. This development was soon to have great significance for the game in Wales, as Old Monmouthians were very prominent in the highly successful Newport sides of a few years later. [58]

Though there is no incontrovertible evidence, when Roath took on Pontypridd in December 1873, they probably played rugby. It is quite possible then that this was the Tredegarville club, or at least an offshoot of it. The match was drawn, with no goals but there is reference to touching the ball down and, as has been shown, the FA had abolished the touch down six

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[57] *SWDN* 23 Nov. 1872 (Brecon), 29 Nov. 1872 (Shewbrook's), 6 Mar. 1873 (Cowbridge); *WM* 12 Feb. 1873 (Llanelli); Gareth Hughes (ed.), *One Hundred Years of Scarlet* (Llanelli, 1983), p. 1; Gareth Hughes, *The Scarlets*, pp. v-vi, 7; Macrory, *Running with the Ball*, p. 192.

[58] H.C. Toulouse, *Monmouth School Rugby Football Club: One Hundred Years* (Newport, 1973), p. 9; James and Rowlands, *Brecon Rugby*, p. 12; *SWDN* 13 Dec. 1873 (Brecon v Christ College); *WM* 20 Dec. 1873 (Roath v Pontypridd), 28 Feb 1874 (Swansea teams), 21 Mar. 1874 (Brecon v College).

years earlier in 1867. Over half of the players who took part were later actively involved in rugby. It is probable, therefore, that the game was played under a version of rugby laws. The existence of a Pontypridd team as early as 1873 was previously unknown. Pontypridd celebrated their centenary in 1976, though a later club history firmly places the club's foundation in 1877-8. Census returns indicate that the participants were predominantly professional and commercial middle-class. Perhaps as a sign of the growing interest, the match report also commented that "a goodly number of ladies honoured the players with their presence." There is evidence that by 1873, if not earlier, the players who were to form the Cardiff Wanderers and Glamorgan clubs, the forerunners of Cardiff, were meeting at the Arms Park to play rugby.[59]

The precise origins of Cardiff's two predecessors have never previously been established. Surprisingly, the club's historians have shown no great interest in them, preferring to concentrate on 1876 as the club's foundation date. For this reason, the misconception has grown that rugby came later to Cardiff than to other Welsh towns but, as has been shown, this was far from the truth. Unfortunately, the club's first historian is a little confusing in the matter of precise dates.

> It was in what I may call the *season of 1873-1874* that a number of young men ... banded themselves together and formed the first real club in the town and called themselves the Glamorgan Football Club. Mr. S. Campbell Cory was the prime mover and early in the *autumn of 1874* he sent out a circular letter stating that it was intended to form a club, and giving the names of about fifty players who had already consented to join. Those to whom circulars were sent were invited to apply for membership to Mr. Henry White ... Some of the player's referred to in Mr. Cory's circular ... had in the preceding season formed themselves into a club for the purpose of playing football in the Cardiff Arms Park.[60]

It is significant that, in 1873-4, S.C. Cory and Henry White were both involved with the Roath club, so there may be connection with this earlier team. Glamorgan is the only Welsh rugby club listed in the 1875 *Football Annual* when its year of foundation is shown as

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[59] *WM* 20 Dec.1873 (Roath); Harvey, 'An Epoch in the Annals of National Sport', pp. 53-87 (FA laws); Desmond T. Jones (ed.), *Pontypridd Rugby Football Club 1876-1976* (Pontypridd, 1976), p. 1; Gareth Harris and Alan Evans, *The Butchers Arms Boys: The Early Years* (Neath, 1997), pp. 11-15.

1873, though an account published some years later suggests 1872 for both Glamorgan and the Wanderers. Arthur relates that there were a number of Cheltenham College men amongst the first members. Though it has proved difficult to identify these, there is a reference to T. Selby playing for Cheltenham College in the 1874 *Football Annual*. This was probably T.S. Donaldson Selby, who was sufficiently prominent to be elected Cardiff's first captain. The Cheltenham College connection is also confirmed by later regular fixtures with Glamorgan and later Cardiff. [61]

The first mention in the local press of Glamorgan does not occur until the beginning of the 1874-5 season, by which time the Arms Park is being used. Around the same time, a separate group was also playing football at the Park. They formed the Cardiff Wanderers club.[62] This was largely the work of W.D. Phillips and there are many later references to his being only seventeen at the time, which would place the year of formation around 1873. One of the pioneers of the Welsh game, Phillips was the son of a public house licensee; and he became a manager of a railway company. He founded the Wanderers shortly after leaving Bridgend School and was the club captain until the amalgamation in 1876.[63] It is possible then that the Wanderers were based around ex-pupils of Bridgend School. Though there is no hard evidence, the Glamorgan club may have initially enjoyed a slightly higher status, perhaps based on a stronger public school contingent. Only a few of the Wanderers matches were recorded in the press and contemporary reports suggest that they concentrated mainly, though not exclusively, on pick-up games. [64]

To summarise then, although there may have been an earlier version of folk or working-class football which subsequently converged with the public school game, it was predominantly the latter which was responsible for the eventual adoption of the handling code in south Wales. Though the Welsh public schools were small, there were several

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[60] Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby*, p.7 (italics added).
[61] *Football Annual* 1875, p. 149; *Cardiff Times* 3 Sept. 1892 (Glamorgan and Wanderers 1872).
[62] *SWDN* 23 Oct. 1874 (Glamorgan), 30 Oct. 1874 (Wanderers and Arms Park), 18 Jan. 1875 (Glamorgan and Arms Park).
[63] W.D. (Bill) Phillips played four times for Wales and served for many years on the WFU. He also held every office of the Cardiff club, including that of captain and was known as the father of the club.
[64] *Cardiff Times* 3 Sept. 1892 (Wanderers pick-up games).

prominent rugby playing public schools in the west of England and it was old boys of these and their English and Welsh feeder schools who also helped to introduce the game to south Wales.

Football of an undefined nature was played from the 1850s at St. David's College Lampeter and from the 1860s at Llandovery College, Christ College Brecon and elsewhere. In the later 1860s, clubs like Newport, Abergavenny, Cardiff, Pontypool and Brecon emerged, though it seems they too played under a mixture of rules and were often short-lived.

Towards the end of the decade, as a result of the efforts of a master from a rugby playing Scottish public school, Llandovery College formally adopted the game, as Lampeter College probably did around the same time. By 1870, Tredegarville, the first Welsh club playing under rugby rules, was in existence. Following the codification of the laws of the game by the RFU in 1871, schools and clubs throughout south Wales began to give up their earlier hybrid and compromise versions of football and to play under a commonly accepted set of rules. Accounting for the take off of rugby rather than soccer in the 1870s in south Wales, Martin Johnes argues that once a particular football code had gained an initial foothold in an area, then it was more likely that local sportsmen would take it up in preference to any rival.[65] It would appear that something like this did happen as, in the second half of the decade, the popularity of rugby increased considerably.

[65] Johnes, *Sport in Wales*, p. 18.

CHAPTER 2

'THE RUNNING BUSINESS': THE GAME IS ESTABLISHED [1]

Whatever versions of football had previously been played in south Wales, there can be no doubt that by 1874-5, rugby had become the overwhelming choice of players. This was a pivotal year in the history of Welsh rugby: new clubs were springing up, the organisation of game was improving and interest was spreading beyond the participants.

Matches were reported involving Brecon, Bridgend School, Cambria (Swansea), Cardiff Wanderers, Cowbridge Grammar School, Glamorgan, Lampeter College, Llandovery College, Newport, Pontypridd, Swansea, Swansea Grammar School and University College Aberystwyth. The Glamorgan club now had a large membership and they fielded two teams on the same day in November 1874.[2] The number of participants still varied greatly, however. It is often asserted that rugby matches were contested by teams of twenty aside match until numbers were reduced to fifteen in 1876-7. However, the idea that because of a decision made at the RFU, Welsh clubs suddenly reduced their teams from twenty players to fifteen is simply to misunderstand the nature of the game at this time. It is quite evident that the norm was for clubs to compete with whatever players they had available. No single example of a Welsh twenty aside game (and only a couple comprising eighteen aside) has been traced in this research. Most matches involved teams of around twelve to sixteen players. [3]

During this season, the press began to mention large attendances; several hundred, for instance, watched Cardiff Wanderers against Pontypridd.[4] The novelty of the game to the public, however, was still apparent. When Glamorgan defeated Swansea at Cardiff:

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[1] *Western Mail* 16 Nov. 1874. See next page for the full quotation.
[2] *WM* 24 Nov. 1874 (Glamorgan).
[3] The only 18 aside matches traced were reported in the *South Wales Daily News* 23 Nov. 1874 (Glamorgan v Wanderers) and 7 Feb. 1876 (Swansea v Llandovery).
[4] *SWDN* 12 Mar. 1875.

> The game was so attractive that on several occasions the spectators passed through the bounds, and in one instance, there was a somewhat laughable spectacle presented by a scrimmage party becoming wholly surrounded by the general public, who, curious to see the mode in which the process was performed, closed round the opponents in scores.[5]

Within only a few years, Welsh spectators would be crowding onto the field of play with worse motives than mere curiosity.

A significant event occurred in September 1874 with the foundation of Newport FC. This appears to have been at least partly an initiative of the Phillips family who had recently moved their brewing operations from Northampton. They brought with them, it is alleged, one of the first oval balls seen in the town which they had acquired in Rugby, where the family also had business interests. The club was founded at Thomas Phillips' Dock Road Brewery by his sons William, an Old Rugbeian, and Clifford together with a group of Old Monmouthians, including Charles Newman, later capped by Wales. As shown earlier, up to 1873, Monmouth School had played a hybrid football, closer perhaps to soccer, so it seems that association may have been initially adopted. If so, the rugby playing Phillipses were not happy with this and Newport soon permanently switched to rugby, playing their first fixture against Glamorgan on 5th April 1875. H.W. Peill, who introduced rugby to Monmouth, is believed to have been influential in the decision.[6]

It was also during 1874-5 that the local press, for the first time, described both the play and the reactions of spectators in a match, played at Pontypridd.

> [On] Saturday great interest was felt in a football match on Ynysangharad fields (kindly leant by Mr. Gordon Lennox) between the Cowbridge Grammar School and

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[5] *SWDN* 18 Jan. 1875.

[6] W.J. Townsend Collins (ed.), *Newport Athletic Club: The record of half a Century 1875-1925* (Newport, 1925), p. 11; Jack Davis, *One Hundred Years of Newport Rugby 1875-1975* (Risca, 1974), pp. 60-1; Brian Glover, *Prince of Ales: The History of Brewery in Wales* (Stroud, 1993), pp. 124-5; Mike Brown, *Brewed in Northants* (Longfield, Kent, 1998), pp. 48-9; Jennifer Macrory, *Running with the Ball: The Birth of Rugby Football* (London, 1991), pp. 192-3; David Smith and Gareth Williams, *Fields of Praise: The Official History of the Welsh Rugby Union 1881-1981* (Cardiff, 1980), p. 25.

> ... Pontypridd ... A commodious marquee had been erected on the ground for the convenience of the ladies. Soon after two o'clock the public began to arrive, and shortly afterwards the excellent brass band of Treforest, comprised exclusively of working men, entered the field ... The game commenced about three o'clock ... and was watched with eager interest by the hundreds that were present, who appeared highly amused. It appears the play was in accordance with the Rugby rules, and by these rules carrying the ball is a prominent feature of the game. This was much oftener done on Saturday than kicking it ... But what afforded most amusement to lookers-on was *the running business*. A red striped Cowbridgian would succeed snatching the ball from the ground, and would then endeavour by his fleetedness of foot to carry it towards his party's goal [sic]. This was the signal for the "blues" to hurry from all parts of the field and fall on the "coch"[7] like an avalanche: Of course this would bring all the "reds" to the rescue of their colleague with the ball, and all would fall, blue and red "in one burial blent"[8], followed by roars of laughter from the spectators. These incidents frequently happened to both parties, and created much merriment. After an hour and a half the Pontypridd club was declared the victor, having won three goals. The Cowbridge boys struggled manfully, and the contest was of the hottest, but they did not succeed in sending the ball over to the goal. It should be stated, however, that [in] the preceding contests which took place between the parties at Cowbridge, the school was victorious, so that this victory places the two clubs on equal footing. [9]

This account is illuminating in several respects. The match was not the first between the teams, an earlier one having been won by the school. The importance of local schools in providing fixtures for the newly established clubs cannot be over-emphasised. One week later, for instance, Cowbridge were entertaining Glamorgan. During the following season, Swansea played Llandovery College no less than five times out of their eleven fixtures.[10]

The match was actively supported by Gordon Lennox, a prominent local industrialist, who provided the field near his home at Ynysangharad House. A former player himself, he had been a member of the Pontypridd team which had played Roath the previous season. Census returns indicate that many of the town team and officials were drawn from the professional and commercial classes. This may be confirmed by the observation that the

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[7] "Coch" is Welsh for red.
[8] This is an allusion to line 252, Canto The Third, in Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, where he refers to the Field of Waterloo: "Rider and horse, - friend, foe, - in one red burial blent!", Jerome J. McGann (ed.), *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, Volume 2 (Oxford, 1980), p. 86.
[9] *WM* 16 Nov. 1874 italics added.
[10] Brinley E. Matthews, *The Swansea Story: A History of the Swansea Rugby Football Club 1874-1968* (Swansea, 1968), p. 11.

Treforest Band comprised only working men, whilst no mention was made of any actually participating in the game. This suggests, therefore, that, even in the valleys, rugby was initially a middle-class pastime.[11]

Of great interest, too, are what may be the earliest recorded references to the reactions of Welsh spectators to the game in which "carrying the ball is a prominent feature". The hundreds who attended were obviously enthralled by this novel "running business". It is hard to imagine what is must have been like to watch a new ball game for the first time but this account reveals something of the sheer thrill, excitement and enthusiasm it must have aroused. Comments such as: "what afforded most amusement to the lookers-on was the running business"; "roars of laughter from the spectators"; and "these incidents ... created much merriment" anticipate the sense of boisterous, humorous spectacle and theatre which has characterised Welsh rugby ever since.

That rugby continued to grow in popularity is revealed in the establishment of the South Wales Football Club (SWFC) in October 1875 at Brecon. The first secretary was H.W. Davies of Brecon, confirming the key position this club held in the very early days. Though the SWFC could in no sense be described as a controlling body for the sport in Wales, it does mark an important step towards that goal. The club's initial objective was simply to provide members with an opportunity to play a better class of football against English teams. This could be interpreted as an acceptance of the inferior status of Welsh football at this time: the only way Welsh players could compete was to combine forces. However, another interpretation might be that, even at a very early stage in the development of Welsh rugby, and before working men were taking up the game in numbers, there existed a strong desire to *compete*. It must be noted that the organisation was a "club" and members were individuals rather than clubs, so early South Wales teams were not truly representative. Subscription fees of five shillings guaranteed that membership was restricted to the better off. Six fixtures against English teams were arranged for the inaugural season though not all were played. The first match involving a "representative" Welsh team took place on 27th

[11] *WM* 20 Dec. 1873 (Roath); 1881 Census.

November 1875 in Hereford. Despite having to borrow three "substitute" players (one of whom was a future captain of Wales, James Bevan, then a pupil at Hereford Cathedral School), South Wales won. However, defeat followed in the fixture with Clifton, played in front of hundreds of appreciative spectators at the Arms Park. According to the Clifton history, the return fixture was cancelled because South Wales were unable to raise a side.[12]

Another first was achieved with the earliest recorded Anglo-Welsh fixture on 13th November 1875 at Cheltenham and it involved a Cardiff team. Though the 1876 *Football Annual* describes the team which played the College as "South Wales Ramblers", it is clear from the press report that their opponents were Glamorgan FC. The College won comfortably, not least because the Welsh club "had the disadvantage of not knowing the College rules", revealing that at this late stage there was still some variation in the rules adopted. That the College had arranged this fixture, which was the forerunner of a long series of games with Cardiff, provides further evidence of the link between Cheltenham and the establishment of the Glamorgan club.[13]

New clubs continued to emerge, or at least feature in the press for the first time, including Ely (later Llandaff), Llandeilo, Llanelli, Neath, Panteg, Pontypool and Vale of Usk (Abergavenny). The founding of the Carmarthen town club this season has been attributed to the arrival of A.F. Laloe, formerly head of Cowbridge Grammar School, who took up the headship of Carmarthen Grammar School in June 1874. Schools rugby continued to flourish. When Llandovery defeated Lampeter, they revealed that training and skill could still overcome size and age. They "counterbalanced their opponents' superiority in weight by their skill in "dodging" and passing on the ball, in which the Lampeterians were deficient, trusting as they did more to "big" kicks." Llandovery only lost one of their five fixtures with Swansea this year. Christ College Brecon adopted rugby this season, playing their first fixture against the town in December. In Cardiff, Monkton House and the Cardiff

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[12] *Brecon County Times* 2 Oct. 1875 quoted in Danny James and P.O.J. Rowlands, *Brecon Rugby Football Club: One Hundred Years of Rugby Football 1879-1979* (Brecon, 1979), p. 13; *WM* 18, 30 Oct. 1875 (SWFC); Frank C. Hawkins and E. Seymour-Bell, *Fifty Years with the Clifton Rugby Football Club 1872-1922* (Bristol, 1922), p. 8.

[13] *Football Annual* 1876, p. 50; *WM* 15 Nov. 1876.

Collegiate combined forces on several occasions as "United Cardiff Schools" to play local men's teams, anticipating the Cardiff Schools Union by nearly 30 years.[14]

Suggesting that players and spectators were beginning to take the game more seriously, particularly in matches between close rivals, the first indications of disagreement appear in press reports and correspondence. For instance, disputes occurred either in, or after, games between Glamorgan and Newport, Carmarthen and Llandeilo and Newport and a Cardiff scratch XV.[15] Nevertheless, the spectacle of the game continued to appeal to increasing numbers as evidenced by the four hundred who attended this last match. When Newport secured a home victory over Swansea:

> A good deal of excitement prevailed among the spectators as the various movements of the contestants were executed, and great enthusiasm prevailed when Newport was declared the winner ... *a large company was present, including many ladies. The game is becoming very popular.*[16]

Towards the end of the season, a dispute occurred between the SWFC and the Football Association of Wales (FAW). This arose when the FAW announced that they had selected a team to play Scotland. SWFC officials protested that they knew nothing about this. The FAW reasonably replied that since Welshmen throughout England and Wales were aware of the arrangements, it was hardly their fault if the SWFC had failed to take notice of the announcements. Lile and Farmer quote the correspondent to *The Field* in 1876 who first suggested a Welsh international team. Based solely on this correspondent's view that association laws were "the rules chiefly adopted in the Principality," they offer this as "confirmation of the early dominance" of soccer in Wales. Given that there were at this

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[14] T.L. Evans, *Carmarthen Rugby Football Club Centenary Year 1874-1974* (Llandeilo, 1974), p. 1 (Laloe); *WM* 2 Dec. 1875 (Lampeter); Matthews, *The Swansea Story*, p. 11 (matches with Llandovery); James and Rowlands, *Brecon Rugby*, p. 13; *SWDN* 17 Dec. 1875 and *WM* 29 Jan. 1876; (United Schools).
[15] *WM* 20 Dec. 1875 (Glamorgan); *WM* 11, 13 Jan. 1876 (Carmarthen); *WM* 7, 8 Mar. 1876; Townsend Collins, *Newport Athletic*, p. 12 (Cardiff XV).
[16] *WM* 20 Mar. 1876, italics added.

time virtually no soccer clubs in south Wales, and certainly none at all of any standing, this assertion requires considerable qualification. [17]

The SWFC secretary's response to the *Western Mail*, however, contains confirmation of the extent of the spread of rugby by this time. He wrote that it was unlikely that players would travel to trials in the north from "Cardiff, Swansea, Neath, Merthyr, Pontypridd, Llanelly or even from Carmarthen or Brecon." The omission of Newport is explained by the uncertainty over the status of Monmouthshire at the time.[18]

This was addressed by the SWFC in October 1876, when it was agreed that Monmouthshire should be considered part of south Wales and, therefore, anyone in the county was eligible to join. It was also "unanimously resolved that the club should enter the Rugby Union challenge cup". This resolution is highly significant, as it reveals that the club members – still overwhelmingly, if not wholly, drawn from the middle and upper classes – were keen to take part in competitive rugby and it is an early indication that Wales would take a distinctly different path from that of the RFU. Unfortunately for the SWFC, events had already overtaken them. During 1875-6, the RMA Woolwich had offered to present a cup for competition amongst RFU clubs. A subcommittee drafted the rules but the offer was withdrawn and the competition kicked into touch for a century.[19]

The game continued to spread geographically and there were signs that it was also beginning to break out of its class boundaries. New clubs in Aberdare and Merthyr continued the expansion into the valleys. These clubs were probably middle-class initially, however. Aberdare included no fewer than six university men in a fixture with Roath in 1877, while Croll shows that Merthyr players at this time were predominantly drawn from the commercial and professional classes. Even in north Wales the game took root though it

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[17] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, pp. 31-2; Brian Lile and David Farmer, 'The Early Development of Association Football in South Wales, 1890-1906', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, (1984), pp. 195-7.
[18] *WM* 15 Mar. 1876.
[19] F. Marshall (ed.), *Football: The Rugby Union Game* (London, 1894 edn.), p. 86; O.L. Owen, *The History of the Rugby Football Union* (London, 1955), p. 251; *WM* 13 Oct. 1876. Unfortunately, the RFU minutes relating to the RMA Woolwich cup proposal have not survived, as there is a gap from 1872 to 1877.

was short lived. In December 1876, Bangor was formed with a decidedly middle-class committee, who resolved "that the game be played according to the rules of Rugby Football". Unfortunately, the club switched to soccer the following year. However, in the south, in the same month, developments were taking place which *were* to have a lasting effect on the Welsh game. [20]

The occasion was the fixture between Swansea Reserves and Swansea Working Men's Club (SWMC) in December 1876. It is likely that some Welsh working men had already begun playing before this date, either by joining existing clubs, or by taking part in informal matches amongst themselves. There are allusions to such games in several club histories but no specific source, other than hearsay, is ever provided.[21] This match then is the first clear evidence of the diffusion of the game to the working class and it therefore marks a very significant stage in the history of rugby. We can only speculate how this began to happen, but it is highly likely that an initial interest in watching the town team led to a desire to give the game a try. There appears to have been little resistance to this process and indeed, it is instructive that Swansea were prepared to give the new club a fixture. Perhaps given the increasing keenness with which matches were being fought, they shrewdly recognised the potential advantage from doing so.

The press were beginning to reflect the "edge" which was creeping into the game. For instance, on the same day as the SWMC match, Cardiff supporters were criticised for their "repeated plaudits of their own party exclusively [which] scarcely constituted a fitting welcome to the Swansea team". Hardly bad behaviour, but a sign, perhaps, that those watching the game were now coming from a social background where there was less regard for the "gentlemanly" code.[22]

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[20] *WM* 21 Dec. 1877 (Aberdare); Andrew J. Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture, Public Space and Urban Meaning, Merthyr c.1870-1914* (PhD thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1997), pp. 222-3; R. Wendell Edwards, *100 Years of Rugby Football in Bangor* (Bangor, 1980), pp. 1-3.

[21] *WM* 13 Dec. 1876 (SWMC). See Anthony J. Moses and Brenda C. Moses, *A History of Dinas Powys Rugby Football Club and its Associations with the Village, 1882-1982* (Risca, 1982), p.1 which refers to young farm-workers and quarry workers playing in the village by 1882, though no records of this exist. The first reported game took place there in 1889.

[22] *WM* 19 Dec. 1876.

It was the desire to produce a team which would best represent the town in an increasingly competitive environment which led Glamorgan and Cardiff Wanderers to merge as the Cardiff Football Club in September 1876. Whilst these earlier clubs had originally been founded purely for the enjoyment of their members, the amalgamated club was now reconstituted to serve the interest of the town's honour. Collins shows that this was also happening in the north of England, where the growth in inter-town rivalry meant that clubs were evolving into civic or community organisations rather than private institutions for young gentlemen. A similar process was at work in New Zealand. By analysing the social composition of clubs in Canterbury, Vincent has shown that before the early 1880s, blue collar workers were largely absent from rugby. However, from the mid 1870s, New Zealand experienced a growth very similar to that in Wales in terms of clubs, players and spectators. Vincent attributes this growth in Canterbury to an acceptance that rugby was a means of defending civic pride and protecting the 'honour of the province' against external 'enemies'.[23]

Before long, both playing and non-playing members of Cardiff would be drawn from a much wider spectrum of society and the club would give them a focus for deep pride in their home town. Holt argues that whereas the working class were anxious to identify emotionally with their town club, this was less important to the middle and upper classes, who had alternative ties to schools and professions. However, in the democratic and inclusive version of rugby which was emerging in south Wales, it was apparent that enthusiastic support for the town was not restricted to the working class. Regional, if not national pride, was also becoming more apparent. Before a crowd of five hundred, probably the largest to watch a game in the principality, South Wales were able to gain revenge over Clifton with a sound victory at Newport. Another development signifying the changing

[23] *WM* 23 Sept. 1876 (Cardiff FC); C.S. Arthur, *The Cardiff Rugby Football Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1906* (Cardiff, 1908), pp. 9-10; Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (London, 1998), pp. 11, 17; Geoffrey T. Vincent, ''To Uphold the Honour of the Province': Football in Canterbury c.1854-c.1890', in Greg Ryan (ed.), *Tackling Rugby Myths: Rugby and New Zealand Society 1854-2004* (Dunedin, 2005), pp. 14-30. See also Greg Ryan, *The Contest for Rugby Supremacy: Accounting for the 1905 All Blacks* (Christchurch, 2005), pp. 13-51 for early rugby in New Zealand.

nature of the Welsh game was the decision by Newport to start charging entrance money this season. Cardiff were reported to be charging for entry a year later.[24]

When the FAW placed a notice in the *Western Mail* in September 1877 announcing the inauguration of a Welsh Cup, they did so in the hope of stimulating soccer in an area which was already becoming a rugby stronghold. Johnes and Garland argue that the introduction of the cup "was to have a significant influence on the development" of soccer. However, in south Wales, its effect was, initially at least, the opposite. An immediate retaliation came with a letter suggesting the introduction of a rugby cup. This accurately predicted that it would stimulate south Wales rugby, "which yearly increases in popularity ... [whilst] association rules are far from popular here." Strong support also came from the Cardiff club. The SWFC secretary replied that the matter had already been discussed and that a special meeting had been convened to consider the proposal. On 22nd October 1877, the SWFC decided to organise the competition. A fifty guinea cup was to be presented to the winners and clubs were invited to send in their entries before 3rd November. The speed with which the competition was set up suggests that the SWFC were anxious not to be beaten to the draw once again by the FAW.[25]

The inspired decision to promote the cup probably ranks only second in importance, if that, to the founding of the Union in 1881 in confirming rugby as the main sporting pastime of the south Wales public. Although the major clubs competed for only ten years, it was during that crucial period that Welsh rugby took off both in popularity and in playing standards. The cup greatly stimulated these processes and it was in these early cup ties that the Welsh public's passion for the game, accompanied by a deep desire for success, first emerged in a significant way. Its popularity was a reflection of the competitive nature of working-class culture which fueled the partisan nature of the Welsh game. In 1897, the

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[24] Richard Holt, 'Working-Class Football and the City: The Problem of Continuity', *British Journal of Sports History*, 3, 1 (1986), p. 10; *WM* 22 Jan. 1877 (Clifton); Townsend Collins, *Newport Athletic*, p. 13 (entrance fees); *WM* 12 Nov. 1878 (Cardiff entrance fees).

[25] Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, ' "The New Craze": football and society in north-east Wales, c1870-90', *Welsh History Review*, 22, 2 (2004), p. 284; Peter Corrigan, *100 Years of Welsh Soccer: The Official History of the Football Association of Wales* (Cardiff, [1976]), pp. 4-5; *WM* 12 Sept. (FAW cup); *WM* 21 Sept., 4, 11, 15, 24 Oct. 1877 (WFU cup).

Western Mail was certain about the significance of the cup to Welsh rugby: it had generated "intense partisanship" and "attracted a following for the various clubs that has never left since them."[26] The South Wales Cup was also the forerunner of numerous county and local cup competitions which sprang up over the following twenty years.[27]

The introduction of a club competition is noteworthy, however, for another reason. The Welsh game was barely out of its infancy in 1877, but it was already sufficiently ambitious and self-confident to innovate, when administrators in older and more established rugby playing areas were not. Two seasons earlier, the RFU had turned down the chance to introduce a competition. Then in 1878, the Calcutta Cup was initially offered for annual club competition but, according to the RFU minutes, the Union rejected this proposal because of "difficulties of all clubs playing together", whatever that meant. The minutes also reveal that the issue of an RFU challenge cup was unsuccessfully raised again in 1881.[28] Though the objectives of the Scottish Union included provision for a cup, at their first AGM in 1873, they dropped the proposal. Similarly the Irish Union rejected a cup in 1882. Tony Collins reveals that the Yorkshire Challenge Cup, involving sixteen invited clubs, was "hurriedly organised for December 1877". As in Wales, improving the standard of play was the primary motive. It is remarkable to note, though, that Wales introduced their cup before Yorkshire, where the game was much more advanced. The first round in Wales was completed *before* 1st December, so it was only by a matter of weeks, but the South Wales Challenge Cup can claim seniority. That it was in Wales that the first major rugby competition for open clubs in the British Isles took place is surely evidence that something different was stirring there.[29]

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[26] *WM* 25 Oct. 1897.

[27] For example, knock-out cups were subsequently organised for clubs in Monmouthshire, Pembrokeshire, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Llanelli, Neath, Aberavon, Blaenavon, Morriston, Ebbw Vale, Treherbert etc.

[28] RFU minutes 22 Jan. 1878, 10 Jan. 1881. For a detailed account of the origin of the Calcutta Cup see Uel A. Titley and Ross McWhirter, *Centenary History of the Rugby Football Union* (London, 1970), pp. 99-102. The Hospitals Cup was introduced in 1874-5 but, of course, was not a competition for open clubs. See Owen, *History of the Rugby Football Union*, p. 251.

[29] A.M.C. Thorburn, *The Scottish Rugby Union: Official History* (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 4-6; Edmund Van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby 1874-1999: A History* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 32-3; Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*, p. 22.

The first competition did not proceed without difficulties, however. There were eighteen entrants but some teams withdrew without playing. Though some matches were played on neutral grounds, the prospect of a long journey still caused some teams to scratch.[30] Match dates were left to clubs to arrange and Cardiff's defeat at Carmarthen was blamed on the home club for responding so late that the visitors only had one day's notice of the fixture, forcing them to take a weakened team. This tie also resulted in a dispute over a vital score, which Cardiff threatened to take to the RFU for resolution. These matters were fully played out in correspondence in the press.[31] (Cardiff's experience of the cup was one of frequent dispute, crowd misconduct, or foul play. As a result, they eventually pulled out permanently in 1883, from which time the competition began to lose some momentum.) A major area of contention which arose before the cup had barely got off the ground was the question of eligibility of players. There were accusations that some clubs were strengthening their teams by bringing in outsiders but H.W. Davies confirmed the rules of the competition in its first season. As in cricket, he wrote, a man could play for any club as long as he was a bona fide member. "In town matches too, it has always been understood that the same man may play for more than one club ... [but] no player will be allowed to compete in the cup for more than one club".[32] In subsequent seasons, however, cup rules limited selection to those who lived within a radius of a club's ground. So, reflecting the increasingly competitive environment, from its very inception the cup became embroiled in argument and dispute.

Despite these difficulties, from the outset it was a success in its primary objective: to stimulate interest in the game. This parallels similar events in Yorkshire where, following the introduction of their cup, new clubs sprang up everywhere and rugby quickly became embedded in the local culture. Collins argues that attendance at Yorkshire cup matches also gave the working class the opportunity, perhaps for the first time, to express their local pride. In its account of the first Welsh final, the *Western Mail* reported that the cup had "aroused the greatest interest throughout [south Wales] and the ties ... have been most

[30] *WM* 7 Nov. 1877.
[31] *WM* 29 Nov., 1, 3, 12 Dec. 1877.
[32] *WM* 19, 24 Nov. 1877, *SWDN* 12, 13 Nov. 1877 (eligibility); *SWDN* 16 Nov. 1877 (H.W. Davies).

eagerly awaited". The final was played in front of a crowd of perhaps 2,000, easily the largest to attend a match so far. The occasion even merited comment in a *Western Mail* editorial. The victorious Newport team received an enthusiastic welcome by a huge crowd on their return home with the all the attendant rituals that were to became the customary response to cup success over the following decade. The joy in Newport was matched by the disappointment in Swansea, where at least one player was verbally abused for his poor performance. Rugby was fast becoming ingrained in Welsh urban culture.[33]

The cup channelled competitiveness between towns into a relatively structured format with a clear winner. However, the increased levels of foul play and dispute, which it also encouraged, were regularly used as arguments against repeated calls for the introduction of an official Welsh league from the late 1880s onwards and delayed its introduction for over a hundred years. Nevertheless, at a lower level, the demand for competition was met by a proliferation of cups and leagues by the 1890s. The WFU, however, took no direct responsibility for these, so they were not co-ordinated in any structured way and were left to local unions to organise.

The appeal of the game continued to breach social barriers. New clubs at Aberavon, Maesteg, Cwmavon and Blaenavon probably drew on working men. Boilermakers at the Uskside Works in Newport formed a club. Youngsters outside schools were also being attracted to the game as evidenced by the games organised between Cardiff, Newport and Roath boys' teams.[34] Crowd trouble was increasing. In matches between Newport and Llandovery College and between Neath and Cwmavon, supporters spilled onto the field and disrupted play.[35] When Swansea WMC played Neath, "A great deal of noisy feeling was

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[33] Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*, pp. 23-4; David Russell, ''Sporadic and Curious': The Emergence of Rugby and Soccer Zones in Yorkshire and Lancashire, c. 1860-1914', *IJHS*, 5, 2 (1988), p. 195; Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, pp. 1-2; *WM* 4 Mar. 1878 and 25 Apr. 1878.

[34] *WM* 17, 25 Jan. 1978 (Uskside); *WM* 24 Dec. 1877, 3 Jan. 1878 (Boys).

[35] *SWDN* 18 Feb. 1878. Eifion Morgan, *Llandovery RFC Centenary 1881-1981* (Llandovery, 1981), pp. 5-8 claims that it was the town and not the college which played Newport in the cup. The press report does refer just to "Llandovery" yet there can be no doubt from earlier mentions of the college in the cup draw and in SWFC meetings that it was not the town which played this fixture. It is questionable whether a town club existed in 1878, yet based partly on such flimsy evidence, Llandovery RFC were granted founder member status in 1981 by the WRU. However, the present writer believes that it was the College and not the town who

shown by the spectators and, as usual, the play was hampered by their crowding in over the touch-line and round the goal ... the scrimmages at times [were] dangerously rough".[36]

As the decade drew to a close, these trends continued. Attendances at matches rose substantially, with Newport, in particular, regularly attracting large crowds of several thousands. In 1879, for example, 2,000, 3,000 and anything between 5,000 and 8,000 spectators were reported to have watched them play Manchester Rangers, Neath and Blackheath respectively. For this last game, supporters lined the walls, fences and tops of houses. Even local clubs sometimes found themselves playing in front of a hundred or so spectators. For example, during their inaugural season, when Pontymister played Newport Crusaders, over a hundred visiting supporters turned up.[37] Though press reports of crowd sizes must always be viewed with scepticism, such figures do indicate a trend of increasing fascination amongst the wider south Wales public. The prospect of watching an exciting football match, however, was not the only attraction. Tranter argues that gambling was one of several reasons for the increasing interest in attending sporting events. Certainly, frequent references to betting were beginning to appear in reports of major Welsh matches, though there seems to have been no concerted efforts to stop the practice. For instance, at the 1879 cup final at Sophia Gardens, "a number of sporting gentlemen were present on the field ... Betting ... was freely indulged in". Rugby, then, also provided new opportunities for gambling and this must have stimulated the enthusiasm, aggression and occasional violence of some of the spectators.[38]

Though hard evidence of the process is difficult to locate, the growing enthusiasm for watching the game contributed to the increased level of participation. The most successful Welsh side of the 1870s were Newport, who went undefeated for their first four seasons,

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were 1881 founder members. There is other evidence to support this assertion. *SWDN* 18 Mar. 1878 (Neath v Cwmavon).

[36] *SWDN* 25 Mar. 1878 (SWMC).

[37] *Star of Gwent* 6 Feb. 1880 (Pontymister).

[38] *WM* 27 Oct. 1879 (Manchester); *SWDN* 17 Mar. 1879 (Neath); *WM* 21 Nov. 1879, *SWDN* 21 Nov. 1879 (Blackheath); Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain, 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 52-4; *SWDN* 10 Mar. 1879 (betting).

during which time they were twice winners of the Challenge Cup. Townsend Collins explains that:

> the success of the team led to an outburst of enthusiasm for the Rugby game at Newport. It was taken up by schoolboys, it extended beyond the then somewhat exclusive circle of the Newport club, and new clubs were formed in the town ... *The little band of players had done more than found a club, they had established a game.*[39]

By 1880, many new clubs had appeared in the town and its neighbourhood, for example, Alexandra Rangers, Caerleon, Caerau Park Rovers, Clytha, Excelsiors, Gas Yard Rangers, Gold Top Rangers, Lliswerry, Maindee, Maindee Star, Newport Albion, Newport Crusaders, Newport Rovers, Newport Wanderers, and Royal Oak.[40] A good example of the diffusion from spectatorship to participation is that of Pontymister which was formed in November 1879 by local cricketers. Forty took part in the first practice and the majority "had never played before, but they have taken great interest in watching the movements of the Newport team and ... did their best to emulate their powerful neighbours." [41]

Of particular significance for the future of the game, local youngsters were taking up rugby, either with junior teams, like Newport Rovers for whom Arthur Gould first played, or for a variety of educational institutions, such as Caerleon Industrial Schools, Newport Grammar School and Clarence Street and Stow Hill Board Schools.[42] Following Newport's cup final victory in March 1879, it was claimed that every school in the town had its team.[43] Of course, such events were not restricted to Newport and similar developments were to be found throughout south Wales, in particular in the major towns, though it was probably in Newport that they first emerged.

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[39] Townsend Collins, *Newport Athletic*, p 19 (italics added).
[40] *WM*, *SWDN* and *Star of Gwent* 1879-1881 (Newport clubs).
[41] *Star of Gwent* 28 Nov., 5 Dec. 1879.
[42] *SWDN* 5 Nov. 1878 (Caerleon); *Star of Gwent* 5 Dec. 1879 (Grammar); *SWDN* 19 Mar. 1880 (Board schools).
[43] *WM*, *SWDN* and *Star of Gwent* Oct. 1878 – Mar. 1880 (Newport schools); *SWDN* 10 Mar. 1879. This is quoted in full in a later chapter.

This investigation into the origins of Welsh rugby confirms Smith and Williams' view that it was mainly public school old boys who were the founder players of the earliest clubs, with their "ranks ... stiffened by the ever-increasing self-confident class of solicitors, doctors, clerks, and engineers". But now the game was reaching out beyond these groups to the lower middle class and the fringes of the working class. Both Cardiff (as will be shown later) and Newport were still predominantly socially exclusive clubs at the end of the decade. A correspondent to the *SWDN* replied to an earlier "accusation" that Newport included "artisans" in their 1879 cup final team. He listed the occupations of all fifteen players and there were no artisans. The team comprised four partners in local businesses, four clerks, two draughtsmen, two civil engineers, a mining engineer, an accountant and a student.[44] However, even in the Newport and Cardiff clubs, such exclusivity, in playing personnel at least, if not administration, would soon change. Their close rivals, Swansea, were already including working men in their team. After their victory in the 1880 cup final, they returned to the Swansea Workingmen's Institute, where ten of the team were members.[45] Townsend Collins locates the arrival of working men in the Newport team shortly afterwards.

> There was no more striking feature in ... 1880-1 ... than the broadening of the bounds of selection. With the rise of new clubs it was recognised that the town club were duty bound to make the team as far as possible representative of the playing talent of the town.

He also claimed that Newport's subsequent success was accounted for by its lack of class distinction and by the acceptance that the club was a town institution and a symbol of civic unity.[46]

Elsewhere, working men were playing the game in greater numbers. Local clubs were not only springing up in Newport but also in Cardiff and Swansea and these were not located exclusively in middle-class districts. Given their proliferation, neither could they have been

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[44] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 24; *SWDN* 14 Mar. 1879.
[45] *WM* 8 Mar. 1880.
[46] Townsend Collins, *Newport Athletic*, pp. 20, 38.

exclusively middle-class in membership. It is known that a club existed in Felinfoel by 1877. According to the Llanelli history, it had been set up by William Nevill who "prevailed upon men who worked in his father's foundry ... and colliers living in Felinfoel to turn out". Unfortunately no date is mentioned and this account is based on recollections published in 1934. Llanelli probably began including working men earlier than most. Though it relates to the mid 1880s, *Old Stager*'s response to a suggestion that the club was composed of colliers is revealing. "I fail to see that it matters two-pence-half-penny whether a team is made up of gentlemen or sweeps, provided they play an honest and fair game". He listed the occupations of the 1886 cup winning team. There were no colliers, but ten were working-class.[47]

Teams were also beginning to appear in the overwhelmingly working-class coalfield valleys. In March 1879, there are press reports of Mountain Ash playing Mountain Ash Temperance. The latter were described as mainly "underground workmen" who had begun playing only three weeks earlier. This, however, implies that, at that time, the Mountain Ash XV did not include many colliers, perhaps supporting the view that even in the valleys, it was the middle classes who first played the game. Whilst examples of exclusively working-class clubs at this time are difficult to identify with certainty, the existence of teams such as Neath Institute/WMC and Llandovery WMC, and pub sides like the Crown, Mountain Ash and the Star, Aberdare is evidence that rugby was beginning to infiltrate working-class culture across south Wales.[48]

The SWFC became less exclusive in composition in April 1879 when it changed its constitution so that clubs, rather than individuals, became members. This was reflected in a change of name to the South Wales Football Union (SWFU). However, as Gareth Williams argues, it is important to recognise that the *control* of the game, particularly at the level of the SWFU/WFU and the senior clubs, remained very firmly in the hands of the middle

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[47] Gareth Hughes, *The Scarlets: A History of Llanelli Rugby Football Club* (Llanelli, 1986), p. 9; *SWDN* 12 July 1886. Their occupations were: ironworkers (3); tinplaters (2); plumber, blacksmith, saddler, stonecutter, painter, schoolmasters (2), chemical factor, clerk and Cambridge graduate.
[48] *WM* 8 Mar. 1879, *SWDN* 10 Mar. 1879 (Mountain Ash); *WM* 16 Apr. 1879 (Neath); *SWDN* 5 Jan. 1880 (Llandovery); *SWDN* 25 Nov. 1879 (Crown and Star).

class throughout the century and beyond. For instance, M.J.E. Morris, the first secretary of the SWFU, had been educated at Cheltenham College. Dunning and Sheard have recently acknowledged that their earlier contention that the Welsh game was administered by the lower middle and working classes was mistaken. However, as will be shown later in relation to Cardiff, the working class would soon begin to dominate in terms of playing numbers and even control of neighbourhood clubs.[49]

The widening of interest in rugby raised the level of competitiveness with which matches were fought and this led to increased disruption both on and off the field. Barlow noted similar trends in Rochdale. Proof that Welsh rugby had finally dispensed with any public school code (if it had ever adopted it in the first place), is found in a letter to the *Western Mail* in 1880 from "Old Cheltonian" who criticised the conduct of the Welsh game. His complaints related to the frequent letters sent to the press disputing results and the players who continually argued with umpires and scorned referees. Such events, allegedly, never happened in England and if they did, the guilty player would be sent off. In Wales, on the other hand, the game was "a series of disreputable squabbles". Though Cheltonian's comments clearly ignore the parallel developments taking place in Yorkshire and Lancashire, they probably record the Welsh rugby public's increasing dissatisfaction with the ethos of the game's gentlemen founders. There were no responses to his letter.[50]

Cheltonian was right about the level of disputes, however. For instance, there were major disagreements involving senior clubs, particularly in the cup, where increasing partisanship often led to disorderly crowd behaviour. When Newport suffered their first ever cup defeat against Swansea in 1879, they threatened to appeal to the RFU, after the SWFU upheld the referee's decision over a disputed score. So disgruntled were they by this, they even held onto the cup at the end of the season until forced to hand it over. It may have been this

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[49] *WM* 21 Apr. 1879 (SWFU and Morris); Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That: Essays on Rugby Football, Sport and Welsh Society* (Llandysul, 1991), pp. 16-17; Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (Oxford, 2005 edn.), pp. 189, 249-250.

[50] Stuart Barlow, 'The Diffusion of 'Rugby' Football in the Industrialized Context of Rochdale, 1868-1890: A Conflict of Ethical Values', *IJHS*, 10, 1 (1993), p. 57; *WM* 28 Feb. 1880.

event which convinced the Newport secretary, Richard Mullock, that a Welsh Union was needed. Much of the trouble in this game was caused by the crowd spilling onto the field and obstructing players and officials.[51] This also happened in a later match against Cardiff, when the Newport team walked off the field after a disputed try. Here the crowd frequently surrounded the players and "the scene became one of uproar and confusion".[52] The theology students and their supporters at Lampeter had a fearsome reputation. In one cup tie, they were accused of biting and hitting a Cardiff player on the head. This match ended in the inevitable dispute. In the subsequent replay, up to fifteen minutes was wasted in disputes. Even though the "clerical element was well represented", there was much "avowed partisanship" and some Lampeter supporters regarded the game as a match between the Welsh and the English, accusing Cardiff of having only two Welsh born players. When Swansea later defeated Lampeter in the final, they received the "same objectionable treatment ... as Cardiff" from the Lampeter supporters.[53] During a match between Newport and Cardiff reserves, a supporter ran on the field and struck the Cardiff umpire. Bridgend supporters were accused of "disgraceful", but unfortunately unspecified, behaviour after losing to Cowbridge Grammar School, while against 10th GRV, they frequently interrupted play with "unruly conduct." Matches were sometimes described as rough, but it is not always clear if this merely refers to a hard game as opposed to a dirty one. Cheating did occur, however. In one game, Neath Abbey kept pushing the posts out of perpendicular every time Bridgend attempted a goal kick![54]

The more enterprising administrators sought new ways of appealing to an ever wider audience. Newport's secretary, Richard Mullock, was particularly good at this. To attract more spectators, Newport were the first Welsh club to arrange fixtures with strong English clubs. In 1879, they promoted a "Football Week" involving several important fixtures including the South of Ireland, whom they beat, and Blackheath, to whom they suffered

[51] *SWDN* 15 Dec. 1879 (match); *WM* 26 Dec. 1879 (RFU); *SWDN* 27 Mar. 1880 and *Star of Gwent* 30 Apr. 1880 (Newport retain cup); *WM* 15 Dec. 1879 (crowd).
[52] *WM* 10 Nov. 1879.
[53] *SWDN* 25 Feb. 1880 (biting), 1 Mar. 1880 (partisanship); *WM* 3 Mar. 1880 (Swansea).
[54] *Star of Gwent* 5 Dec. 1879 (umpire attacked); *WM* 22 Oct. 1878 and 7 Dec. 1878 (Bridgend); *SWDN* 20 Feb. 1880 (Neath Abbey).

their first ever defeat. In 1878, Newport arranged the first recorded floodlit match in Wales against Cardiff, using electric lights. This was only eight weeks after the earliest ever floodlit rugby match at Broughton on 22nd October. Here again is evidence of the willingness of Welsh rugby to experiment to widen the appeal of the game. Had Newport gone ahead with their initial proposal to play a practice match under lights on the 5th October, they might have been able to claim to be the innovators of this form of rugby.[55]

For the 1878-9 cup, the SWFU introduced new regulations restricting teams to selecting players from a ten mile radius. They also decided, in the absence of any specification in the RFU laws, to adopt a standard pitch size of 120 x 75 yards.[56] These were relatively small matters, but they do indicate that Welsh rugby was beginning to develop a degree of independence from the RFU. The SWFU continued with an ambitious programme of fixtures but turning out the strongest teams was still a problem, with away games being particularly difficult. There was an enormous variation in the composition of teams from match to match, with no apparent consistency in selection. A fixture with Cheltenham College was not fulfilled because of a cup clash. However, a good win was achieved over the visiting South of Ireland team in November 1879, which could be regarded as the first "representative" match played in Wales. Similar unofficial Irish teams returned to play South Wales and leading clubs for several more seasons and undoubtedly fuelled the appetite for international competition.[57]

Welsh rugby changed out of all recognition during the 1870s. A minority leisure pastime was becoming the passion of a wider public. This was nicely summed up by the *SWDN* at the very end of the decade following Newport's defeat by Swansea in the cup.

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[55] *SWDN* 17 Dec. 1878; *WM* 16 Sept. 1878; John Griffiths, *Rugby's Strangest Matches: Extraordinary but true stories from over a century of rugby* (London, 2000), pp. 9-10.
[56] *SWDN* 3 Oct. 1878.
[57] Van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, pp. 33-4. The status of this touring side is in some doubt. Van Esbeck says it was Munster and they received a severe reprimand from the IFU for travelling to Wales without permission. Strangely, he places the tour in 1881 but in describing the three fixtures played, it is clear that it was the 1879 tour to which he referred.

> To the uninitiated it is quite a remarkable feature to notice the interest taken by the inhabitants generally in the result of these periodical contests, but the fact is they have grown to look upon the matter as one where the credit of the town is at stake ... in South Wales ... the rivalry between the leading clubs has added much to the interest taken in [rugby] by the general public. [58]

Wales in Union

The 1880-1 season marked a major turning point in the development of Welsh rugby, for in this year the WFU was formed and Wales played her first international. Technically, the Welsh XV was an unofficial one, since the Union was not brought into being until several weeks later but the match has traditionally been recognised as a full international. Besides, Scotland played two official internationals against England before the SFU was founded in 1873, so there is precedence for this.

These events are well covered in *Fields of Praise*. However, this study has provided an opportunity to return to 1881 and examine that year in rather more depth than Smith and Williams were able to do. Whilst their general argument is confirmed, this study has revealed that on some points of detail, there is new evidence to put forward, especially with regard to the role of Richard Mullock.[59]

The season opened with a remarkable letter to the press criticising the SWFU secretary for not arranging a general meeting in accordance with the constitution.[60] This was remarkable because the writer was Richard Mullock and it was just the kind of complaint he would later receive when he was WFU secretary. The meeting was eventually held when Sam Clarke of Neath was appointed the new secretary. Mullock's growing irritation with the SWFU cannot have been improved when the Union organised an East v West trial in which the East team comprised ten Neath players, three from Bridgend and one from Newport Crusaders. Either the players from Cardiff and Newport were ignored or they deliberately made themselves unavailable. Either way, it suggests all was not well within the Union.

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[58] *SWDN* 15 Dec. 1879.
[59] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise,* pp. 34-45.

It is generally accepted that an informal meeting had been held during the previous season at the Tenby Hotel in Swansea in March 1880 when discussions were held about arranging an international with England. Smith and Williams disprove the previously widely held view that it was here that the WFU was founded. They also establish beyond any reasonable doubt that the clubs which were believed to have attended were identified retrospectively, simply by listing the "clubs" apparently represented in the first international team.[61] Though no written confirmation of the Tenby Hotel meeting has survived, this research has located evidence which suggests that it may have happened. In the 1881 *Football Annual*, Mullock writes as the new WFU secretary, "Some time previous to the formation of this Union, *and after consultation with the leading clubs*, International matches were arranged with England and Ireland." Of course, "consultation" does not necessarily mean that a meeting of clubs was actually held. Perhaps Mullock was simply trying to deflect criticism by claiming that his actions were based on a consensus of clubs. However, this is the nearest that we have to a corroboration of the Tenby Hotel meeting. Strangely, when describing the foundation of the Union, Mullock places it in Swansea and not Neath where it was held in March 1881.

> At a meeting at *Swansea* in March last it was decided that such a Union should be formed. At the same time the South Wales FU was dissolved and its Challenge Cup handed over for competition by any club belonging to the Welsh Football Union.

Was Mullock confusing his meetings? [62]

Whether as a result of the Tenby Hotel meeting or of his "consultations", Mullock presumably felt he had a mandate to proceed. It is significant that Newport appeared for the first time amongst the forty-one clubs attending the RFU AGM on 25th October 1880 and were the only Welsh club to do so. There can be little doubt that Mullock attended to sound out English officials and he must have made a favourable impression. Only four days later,

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[60] *WM* 5 Aug. 1880.
[61] Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, pp. 37-8.
[62] *Football Annual* 1881, p. 169, italics added.

the press reported, "The Rugby Union committee want to arrange an international match between England and Wales to be played at Newport in February next." Since this appeared in a report about Newport, it almost certainly came from the hands of Mullock, no doubt with an element of "spin". Nevertheless, only a few weeks afterwards on the 30th November, the RFU minutes record:

> A letter from Mr. R. Mullick [sic] of Newport Monmouthshire was read proposing a match with Wales – after considerable discussion it was proposed by L. Stokes [and] seconded by J. McLaren That the challenge be accepted – the match to be played in London on 8th Jan.[63]

Because the Welsh team performed so badly in the first match against England, all kinds of criticism has been heaped on Mullock's head, some justified, some not.[64] He arranged a trial at Swansea for 29th December. *Fields of Praise* says that the match did not take place yet the match *was* held, though it was not a great success. Welsh trials throughout the nineteenth century rarely were. There was too much individual, selfish play with little passing of the ball. At least five, perhaps six, of the subsequent Welsh XV took part and there was a good spread of clubs represented.[65]

However, the RFU decided on the 30th December that the match would have to be postponed until 22nd January and a subsequent meeting reported that "the Wales committee" accepted this. A severe frost resulted in further delays and at one point the RFU, revealing their priorities, warned Mullock that the game might be cancelled because they were looking for new dates for Scotland and Ireland.[66] However, it was eventually fixed for the 19th February. This delay caused problems for Mullock's selections, but it also meant that during the seven weeks between the trial and the match, there were plenty of opportunities to publicise the team. The view that some players were unaware that they had been selected is therefore hard to believe. On at least three occasions, the team appeared in

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[63] RFU minutes 25 Oct. 1880 (AGM); *WM* 29 Oct. 1880 and *Star of Gwent* 29 Oct. 1880 (international in Newport); RFU minutes 30 Nov. 1880 (international accepted).
[64] See, for example: Martin Johnson, *Rugby and All That* (London, 2001), pp. 41-4.
[65] *SWDN* 30 Dec. 1880.
[66] RFU minutes 30 Dec. 1880, 10 and 25 Jan. 1881

the local press. There *were* some variations and, given two postponements, injuries and unavailability perhaps made them inevitable. What is surprising is how few changes there were. The team published on 13th January had thirteen of the eventual side plus one reserve who played; that of the 12th February (a squad of seventeen) had thirteen; and that of 19th February had twelve, with three reserves who subsequently played.[67] Thus, the selection was not as haphazard as usually claimed, especially when it is recognised that only *eleven* of the originally selected England XV played on the day.[68]

It is widely believed that some players had not even been notified of their selection and that, as a result, Wales were forced to include men from the touchline. *Who* these "Oxford and Cambridge" men were, however, has never been established. This version is based on the recollections of Richard Summers. Speaking on the BBC some 50 years later, he recalled:

> When we got to the changing room, we discovered that we were two men short, their invitations apparently having gone astray. However, we picked up two 'Varsity men with Welsh qualifications, and they agreed to fill vacancies on condition that they were allowed to play three-quarter. [69]

Yet the three-quarters who played were James Bevan of Cambridge, who was captain and who had always been in the team, and Edward Peake of Oxford.[70] Peake was originally selected but then dropped to reserve to accommodate a more experienced player, Robert Knight. On the morning of the international, the *SWDN* published the Welsh team, of whom three did not play. Those who came into the side, as their replacements, were Edward Peake, Edward Treharne and Godfrey Darbishire. Since all three were *named reserves*, the idea that Wales had to pick players from the touchline can be dismissed. Indeed, that Wales arrived *with* reserves is much to Mullock's credit. Despite having far

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[67] *WM* 13 Jan., 12 Feb. 1881; *Star of Gwent* 11 Feb. 1881; *SWDN* 19 Feb. 1881.
[68] *WM* 12 Jan. 1881 (originally selected English team); John Griffiths, *The Book of English International Rugby 1871-1982* (London, 1982), p. 30 (England XV v Wales).
[69] Quoted in John Reason and Carwyn James, *The World of Rugby: A History of Rugby Union Football* (London, 1979), pp. 39-40.
[70] Bevan was presumably selected as captain as, having played for Cambridge University since 1877, he had the most experience in playing against strong English teams.

more resources and experience, the RFU were twice forced to pick up players at away matches, against Ireland in 1880 and against Scotland in 1881. [71]

Summers may have confused those who came into the side with those who dropped out. Two of the latter were Oxford Blues. Robert Knight was a half-back from Bridgend and an old boy of Cowbridge Grammar School, whilst three-quarter Arthur Evanson came from Llansoy, Gwent. A Blue in 1879, Knight missed the 1880 Varsity Match because of injury, which might explain his absence. His selection, however, was a logical one: he had just been appointed term captain of the University and he would also have renewed his half back partnership with his fellow Blue, Leonard Watkins. One history of the Varsity Match implies Knight turned down a Welsh cap in the hope of being selected for England, though he never was. Evanson, however, *was* later capped by England and was regarded as an outstanding three-quarter. It would appear then that Mullock was justifiably keen to select two Welsh born Oxford Blues who were of, or very near, international standard for England. It is doubtful if there were any more experienced players available than these two Welshmen and it made good sense to invite them to play. Unfortunately, the promise of a possible England cap meant more than a guaranteed Welsh one. It is difficult to see these particular selections as evidence of Mullock's maverick policy when it is remembered that, when the first ever officially selected Welsh team was picked to play the North of England a year later, both Knight and Evanson were still included, though they again withdrew.[72]

It is frequently alleged that John Brooks of Pontypridd was never informed of his selection, but Brooks' claim cannot be sustained by the evidence.[73] He did not take part in the trial, he had never previously represented South Wales and his name is not listed in any of the Welsh teams published before the match. Indeed, his name does not appear in any

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[71] *SWDN* 19 Feb. 1881 (selected Welsh team); Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, p. 40 (Welsh XV); Griffiths, *English International Rugby*, pp. 26 (Ireland v England), 31 (Scotland v England).
[72] *WM* 16 Apr. 1878 (Cowbridge GS); Howard Marshall and J.P. Jordan, *Oxford v Cambridge: The Story of the University Rugby Match* (London, 1951), p. 34; 1881 Census; Ross McWhirter and Andrew Noble, *Centenary History of Oxford University Rugby Football Club* (Oxford, 1969), Blues Biographical Section, pp. [20] (Evanson), [35] (Knight); Titley and McWhirter, *Centenary History Rugby Football Union* (London, 1970), Biographical Section, p. [33] (Evanson); *WM* 7 Jan. 1882 (Welsh selection v North).

Pontypridd team list until several years after the 1881 match. It is hard, therefore, to see how he could have been considered for selection at this time.

Where Mullock might justifiably be criticised is in his selection of some players who were little known in Wales and who did not appear to have a strong rugby pedigree. It is quite evident that a primary concern was to select players who had experience of playing in England or against English teams. This perhaps was not such a foolish policy, for there cannot have been any realistic hope that Wales would defeat England, whatever side was picked. What was wrong with the policy was that some of these "English" players were simply not good enough. Another criticism is that Mullock ignored the justifiable claims of players from other clubs, Swansea, Neath and Llanelli in particular, while Newport, with six players, and Cardiff, with four, were well represented. This suggests Cardiff officials may have been involved in the team selection.[74] Even before the match took place, complaints were made about the team.[75] That there was a cup semi-final on the day of the international does not exonerate Mullock for failing to pick any players from Llanelli and Swansea, as they had not been included in the original team selection.[76] There is little doubt that Mullock included too many men with little proven ability and that he could have found some players of a better standard from within the personnel playing regularly in Wales.[77]

An examination of the social background of the first Welsh XV reveals few surprises. It would be three years yet before the first genuinely working man, Cardiff's William Stadden, would win a Welsh cap. The team was made up predominantly of students. Three (Bevan, Lewis and Newman) were at Cambridge and two (Peake and Watkins) at Oxford. Treharne was a medical student and Summers was studying prior to joining the Army. Garnons Williams, who belonged to the landowning gentry, was a serving Army officer; Darbishire was a civil engineer and Rees was a farmer and solicitor. Mann was articled to a

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[73] Gareth Harris and Alan Evans, *The Butchers Arms Boys: The Early Years* (Neath, 1997), pp. 23-4; Gareth Harris, *Taff Vale Park: Memories Lost in Time* (Pontypridd, 2000), pp. 177-180.
[74] *WM* 13 Jan. 1881. One of the reserves selected for 22nd January, however, was G.L. Morris of Swansea.
[75] *WM* 14 Jan. 1881.
[76] *WM* 18 Jan. 1881.
[77] 1881 Census; Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, pp. 39-41; Davis, *Newport Rugby*, p. 57; Edwards, *Rugby in Bangor*, pp. 1-8.

land agent while the remainder, Girling, Harding, Phillips and Purdon were all clerks, not always easy to classify, but certainly a white collar occupation. The team, then, was representative only of the middle class and the gentry. There were no artisans. In addition, of the fifteen, seven had been born outside Wales: Bevan in Australia; Purdon and Mann in Ireland; and Darbishire, Girling, Harding and Peake in England. Johnes and Garland investigated the social composition of the first Welsh soccer team in 1876. They found that it was mainly middle-class in character but, unlike the first rugby team, there were *some* working-class players in the Welsh XI including a miner, a stonemason and a chimney top maker. Nevertheless, they conclude that the "social networks of the middle-class FAW" would have determined the broadly middle-class make-up of the team. Similar networks in the administration of Welsh rugby guaranteed the social character of the 1881 XV, especially given the selection policy with regard to experience in England.[78]

Even though the match against England was an embarrassing disaster, it nevertheless had a beneficial outcome. One immediate response was an irate letter to the press asking if the team was "a private team, got up by Mr. Mullock". Sam Clarke replied that the SWFU had had nothing to do with it and that "Mr. Mullock was one of the committee who selected the Welsh team". However, even before these letters were published, as *Fields of Praise* reveals, the *Athletic World* of 24th February was reporting that "The Welsh are, I understand, about to form a Union". Coming so soon after the 19th of February, this resolution must have been made by interested parties at Blackheath. The next time they would all get together again would be on the 12th March for the cup final at Neath, so it was decided to convene the meeting then and there.[79]

At that meeting, "after considerable discussion", it was unanimously resolved to form the Union. Mullock was elected secretary by a unanimous vote. He was also charged with arranging the selection of a team to play Ireland before the end of the season. The clubs reported as being represented at the meeting included Bangor, Brecon, Cardiff, Llandeilo,

[78] 1881Census; John M. Jenkins, Duncan Pierce and Timothy Auty, *Who's Who of Welsh International Rugby Players* (Wrexham, 1991); Johnes and Garland, 'The New Craze', pp. 287-8.

Llanelli, Merthyr, Newport, Pontypool and Swansea. Two others were "Lampeter" and "Llandovery". The evidence of reported club matches around 1881 and of Mullock's list of "principal" clubs (see the following paragraph) confirms that these must have both been College teams rather than town clubs. Nevertheless, on very questionable grounds, the latter have been accorded "founder member" status by the WRU and, as such, took part in the centenary celebrations. So too did Bangor, though their history admits that the club did not even exist at the time. It is possible that Darbishire attended the meeting as a representative from the Bangor area, as he was appointed one of three vice presidents of the Union for 1881-2. One of the others was Edward Fry of Cardiff, perhaps confirming the club's close involvement in the various negotiations during the previous year.[80]

A few months later, writing on behalf of the WFU in the *Football Annual*, Mullock listed the "Principal Rugby Clubs" in Wales thus: Abergavenny, Aberdare, Bangor, Bridgend, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Carmarthen College, Chepstow, Denbigh, Lampeter College, Llandeilo, Llandovery College, Llanelli, Neath, Newport, Pontypridd, Pontypool and Swansea. The status of Denbigh must be as doubtful as that of Bangor. It is likely that his list includes some clubs which joined the Union after 12th March 1881.[81]

Mullock goes on to say that during the previous two years, the game had made rapid progress and had become very popular in the south, "but unfortunately the style of play has not improved". It was clearly his expectation that the new Union would change this. The WFU had also been formed, he wrote, "to promote a greater amount of sociability and good fellowship between the clubs." Mullock explained that a match with Ireland had been arranged for the 9th April 1881 and a team selected, but the IFU then cancelled it because "no ground could be obtained". This was the first in a series of problems which Wales were to experience in international match arrangements with Ireland in the early years.[82]

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[79] *WM* 28 Feb. 1881 (letter), 3 Mar. 1881 (Clarke), 15 Mar. 1881 (formation of Union); Smith and Williams, *Fields of Praise*, pp. 41-6.
[80] *WM* 15 Mar. 1881.
[81] *Football Annual* 1881, p. 171-2.
[82] *Football Annual* 1881, pp. 169-172. Mullock's account of the unplayed fixture with Ireland is confirmed by Van Esbeck, *Irish Rugby*, pp. 33-4.

To sum up, then, Mullock was a key figure in the development of the game in Wales. He had been secretary of Newport, when they were, for several seasons, the dominant club in Wales. He generated increasing interest in the game there with a number of initiatives, particularly by promoting a series of attractive matches with teams from outside Wales. During his stewardship at Newport, rugby spread like wildfire there, both in terms of spectators and new clubs and Newport became the first community in Wales to develop an obsession with the game. It was his ambition and persistence which led to Wales becoming accepted as international opponents. This was no easy task, especially given the somewhat condescending manner with which Wales was regarded at the time, not merely in sporting circles. He also recognised that, if Wales were to achieve anything beyond mere county standard, it was necessary to establish a national ruling body responsible for the all aspects of the game. He had his faults: a tendency to go his own way, slack financial management and at times poor administration, but these were outweighed by his crucial contribution to the establishment of Welsh rugby on firm foundations. This was acknowledged by his contemporaries who elected him unanimously as the Union's first secretary. He deserves better than the critical judgements which are sometimes made about him.[83]

The 1880-1 domestic season was characterised by continuing growth in the numbers playing and watching and, as a consequence of this, by increasing coverage of the game at all levels in the press. Competition was getting keener and, especially in cup matches, players were taking the game more seriously by practising and training. However, disputes on the field were more common and there were more crowd disturbances involving pitch invasions and even violence against visiting teams.

Welsh rugby had travelled a long way in a decade. Evidence of the game's expansion can be found in the columns of the *Western Mail* and *SWDN*. During this season, they made reference to around ninety teams, many with reserve XVs. Since these papers were based in Cardiff, they probably under reported teams elsewhere, so the actual total may have been

[83] For example, Johnson, *Rugby and All That*, pp. 41-4.

much higher.[84] Four thousand spectators attended the cup tie between Newport and Cardiff and large crowds watched that between Swansea and Llanelli. At the cup final in Neath, "thousands ... surrounded the ropes ... [while] as many were stationed outside", seated on railway trucks or in the upper windows of surrounding houses. In a preview of this match, an editorial in the *SWDN* spoke of "the growing popularity of this favourite game".[85]

Tranter believes that, given the number of football matches played in Britain, incidents of crowd misconduct were atypical. Most rugby games in Wales, too, probably passed off without any serious trouble. Nevertheless, there does appear to have been an increase in the number of unpleasant incidents. In the Neath-Bridgend cup tie in December 1880, the visitors were pelted with turf, though whether this was because Bridgend played like "semi-savages", as the *Neath Gazette* claimed, is not clear. One of the worst incidents of the season occurred in the cup match at Newport, when Cardiff recorded their first ever win over their arch rivals. The pre-match anticipation for the meeting between "the two best clubs in Wales" was intense. "The two towns had been well placarded" and the teams widely publicised. Fighting broke out between players but it was Cardiff's disputed winning try which caused the crowd to erupt. After the match, the "mob surrounded the pavilion", where they verbally abused the Cardiff team. As the players left the ground, some were kicked and beaten and one was pulled off a cab. The angry supporters even attempted to throw the try scorer into the river. The Cardiff press was outraged, of course. The *Star of Gwent*, on the other hand, ignored these incidents but thought, "It was most unbecoming ... of the visitors to claim a try". Evidently, partisanship was no longer merely confined to club supporters: after all, the reputation of the whole town was now dependent on success in these encounters.[86]

For example, when the *Llanelly Guardian* previewed the cup match against Bridgend in February 1881, it announced, "We notice that several of the players are in offices and

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[84] See Appendix 1 for a list of rugby teams in Wales in 1880-1.
[85] *SWDN* 12, 14 Mar. 1881.
[86] Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society*, p. 47; W.A.D. Lawrie, *Bridgend Rugby Football Club: The First Hundred Years* (Bridgend, 1979), pp. 18-20 (semi-savages); *WM* 20 Dec. 1880 (Newport); *SWDN* 20 Dec. 1880 (Newport); *WM* 25 Oct. 1897 (river); *Star of Gwent* 24 Dec. 1880.

shops, and we appeal to their employers to permit special facilities for this important match, *as the honour of the town is at stake*." Although Llanelli's later victory over Swansea was only a semi-final match, the team was, nevertheless, given a huge welcome on returning home, including a torchlight procession headed by the local band.[87]

Pitch invasions were another way in which supporters were beginning to display their displeasure and even influence the outcome of matches. The Llanelli-Bridgend tie was frequently disrupted by disputes during which spectators rushed onto the field to participate. The game came to an abrupt end with the field full of spectators. The cup final at Neath ended when Cardiff scored a try against Llanelli well into extra time. Hundreds ran on to the field: Cardiff supporters to celebrate and Llanelli supporters to protest. A number of fights broke out and the Cardiff umpire had to be escorted off the field by the police. The match ended in chaos with Cardiff unable to take the conversion and Llanelli unable to use the final couple of minutes to try to equalise.[88] The *Western Mail* commented:

> owing to the animosity which is excited by the contests for the challenge cup several of the leading clubs ... contemplate withdrawing from the competition; and it is probable that the "rowdyism" displayed at Neath on Saturday last will precipitate their decision.[89]

It was hoped that the new Union would prevent such incidents in the future, but following more violent matches, Cardiff permanently withdrew from the competition in 1883 and this began the process of the South Wales Challenge Cup's decline. The Welsh game was in desperate need of greater control, both to develop its enormous potential and to deal with the wilder excesses of its growing number of adherents on and off the field. From 1881 onwards, though it was not always successful in doing so, Wales now had a Union which could, at least, attempt to achieve these objectives.

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[87] *Llanelly and County Guardian* 6 Jan. 1881 and 24 Feb. 1881, quoted in: Gareth Hughes (ed.), *One Hundred Years of Scarlet* (Llanelli, 1983), pp. 25-7, italics added; *WM* 21 Feb. 1881.
[88] *SWDN* 14 Feb. 1881 (Bridgend), 14 Mar. 1881 (final).
[89] *WM* 14 Mar. 1881.

In summary, rugby became the clear choice of footballers in south Wales by the mid 1870s. The number of clubs, players and spectators was increasing substantially and the game's organisation was evolving. Formed in 1875, the SWFC changed from a members club to a more democratic union of clubs in 1879. This body was responsible for introducing both representative and cup rugby to Wales. Though it was largely, if not entirely, dominated by the middle and upper classes, its membership nevertheless displayed a keen interest in competitive rugby. The South Wales Challenge Cup had an immediate and dramatic impact on the development of Welsh rugby as a cross-class sport. In particular, it appealed to the competitive nature of working-class culture and it stimulated strong and lasting club loyalties and partisanship. Associated with this, clubs evolved from private institutions run for the enjoyment of a few young gentlemen into standard bearers of the honour of the town. In an increasingly competitive environment, civic pride now mattered, but there was also a downside. By the end of the decade, match disputes, foul play and crowd disturbances were becoming more commonplace.

By the later 1870s, rugby had expanded from the coastal towns into the industrial hinterland; the first working-class clubs began to emerge; and working-class players began to appear in previously socially exclusive teams. Youths and schoolboys were also taking up the game, particularly in Newport where the success of the town team resulted in an explosion of interest and participation in the game. Major club matches were now attracting crowds of several thousand, one consequence of which was the gradual monetisation of the game in Wales, as admission charges became standard practice.

Though his role has often been criticised, there is no doubt that Richard Mullock was primarily responsible both for introducing international rugby to Wales and for establishing the Welsh Football Union in 1881. These were very powerful symbols of the immense changes experienced in the Welsh game during the previous decade. By 1882, it was possible for the press to proclaim, "it is now a recognised fact that football is the national outdoor game of the Welsh".[90] It was within this wider context, then, that rugby came to

[90] *SWDN* 6 Mar. 1882.

dominate the sporting culture of late Victorian Cardiff. This is the subject of the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

'IN CARDIFF AND DISTRICT SURELY THEIR NAME IS LEGION': THE CLUBS [1]

Rugby in nineteenth-century Wales is often portrayed as a cohesive and socially inclusive sport, which enjoyed mass support across the classes and which therefore became a cornerstone of Welsh popular culture. The following chapters will consider the validity of this view by examining in detail the impact which rugby football had in the largest town in Wales.

At the beginning of the century, Cardiff was a small, insignificant market town with a purely local trade and a population of just 1,870. Within a hundred years, however, it had become not only the regional capital of south Wales but also one of Britain's largest ports and of worldwide importance.[2] This astonishing change was acknowledged by a Board of Trade report in 1908.

> There is no more interesting study in town growth and development than Cardiff. At the Census of 1851 it was a place of some 20,000 inhabitants with no influence in commerce and no reputation. Now, it is one of the most thriving cities in the country, a centre of trade and commerce and a great port. In every respect the development has been remarkable.[3]

Though Cardiff began exporting iron from Merthyr following the opening of the Glamorganshire canal in 1798, its rise as a major port and regional centre was based on the expansion of the coal trade. From around 1850, coal began to overtake iron as the main staple of the south Wales economy and Cardiff became its main place of export. It also

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[1] The *South Wales Daily News* 22 July 1890 refers to the "lovers of the popular winter pastime – and in Cardiff and district surely 'their name is legion.' "

[2] M.J. Daunton, *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1977), p. 11.

[3] *Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into Working Class Rents, Housing and Retail Prices*, 1908, p. 132 quoted in Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, p. [1].

began to replace Bristol as the commercial centre for south Wales. By 1871, Cardiff had overtaken Merthyr to become the largest town in Wales.[4]

By the 1880s, south Wales dominated British coal exports and Cardiff dominated the south Wales trade. In 1870, three million tons were exported from Cardiff: by 1900 the figure had risen to nearly eight million.[5] However, though Cardiff developed a range of commercial and recreational services as it evolved into the regional capital, it never became a centre of manufacturing. Nevertheless, at the end of the century, it was being described as both the "metropolis of Wales" and the "coal metropolis of the world".[6] Indeed, the town rugby club was often referred to as the "Welsh Metropolitans" at this time.

Between 1851 and 1911, Cardiff's population grew from 20,000 to 182,000, an astonishing rate of increase, which was not matched by any other major town in Britain, apart from Middlesbrough.[7] Following the construction of new docks, the populations of neighbouring Penarth and Barry also expanded, as shown in Table 2. Barry, in particular, grew phenomenally and, by 1913, it had also overtaken Cardiff in tonnage of coal exports.[8]

These events led to immense changes in the way of life of the town and its surrounding area. They included an unprecedented enthusiasm for organised sport and overwhelmingly for rugby football. Strangely, then, histories of Victorian Cardiff largely or, in some cases, completely ignore the impact that rugby had on the social, cultural, economic and civic life of the town. Indeed, a disinterested reader of Stewart Williams' popular thirty-six volume series of photographs, *Cardiff Yesterday*, could be forgiven for concluding that Cardiff was no different from most other industrial British cities, where association football dominated the sporting culture and where rugby was relegated to a minority interest. But, as this

[4] Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, pp. 2-8; William Rees, *A History of Cardiff* (Cardiff, 1969 edn.), pp. 231-241 (canal).
[5] Rees, *A History of Cardiff*, p. 271.
[6] Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, p. [1]
[7] Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, p. 11.
[8] Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, p. 7; Rees, *A History of Cardiff*, pp. 296-8.

research will show, such a view would be highly inaccurate, *especially* when considering the late Victorian period.[9]

This chapter therefore aims to assess the importance of the game in Cardiff by examining the extent and nature of the participation in rugby. This will be done by establishing, for the first time, the number of teams in Cardiff for each season between 1870 and 1900 and tracing their origin and location. The organisation of the game and the social background of its participants; and the social and economic impact of rugby on urban life on the local culture will be explored in later chapters. Finally, the study will attempt to explain why rugby became such an important part of the popular culture of Cardiff in the late nineteenth century.

For the purposes of this analysis, "Cardiff" is defined as including the administrative area of the modern city, as well as Penarth and Barry. Teams from these towns have been included because they have always been an integral part of "Cardiff and District" rugby where they have regularly contested friendly and competitive matches.[10]

As shown earlier, a form of football was played sporadically in south Wales during the 1860s, but it was in the following decade that rugby became established. In Cardiff, organised rugby arrived early with the emergence of the Tredegarville club in 1870, shortly followed by Glamorgan and Cardiff Wanderers. In order to create a team better able to represent the interests of the town, these two clubs amalgamated in September 1876 to form Cardiff Football Club. However, even as this was happening, new clubs were emerging. In February 1876, Llandaff (known initially as Ely) was founded; while at the time of the Cardiff merger, another group of footballers were setting up the Roath club.[11]

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[9] For example: Rees, *A History of Cardiff*; Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*; Dennis Morgan, *The Cardiff Story: A History of the City from its Earliest Times to the Present* (Cowbridge, 1991); Stewart Williams, *Stewart Williams' Cardiff Yesterday*, 36 Volumes (Barry, 1980-2000).

[10] *WM* 15 Nov. 1892. Barry, for instance, were founder members of Cardiff and District FU.

[11] *Western Mail* 23 Sept. 1876 (amalgamation); *SWDN* 4 Feb. 1876 (Ely); *WM* 12 Sept. 1876, 26 Feb. 1877 (Roath).

Table 1 was compiled by recording all teams mentioned in the *Western Mail* and the *South Wales Daily News* for each season between 1870 and 1900.[12] Examples of two years are shown in Appendices 2 and 3. Attempting to record the number of clubs in this way over such a long period is not without difficulties. Apart from simple human error, negative micro-films and missing and defaced editions, the reliability of the collected data has to be questioned. Some clubs may have changed their name during the season while others may have had their names reported incorrectly, both of which could inflate totals. Unfortunately, there is often no way of reliably dealing with this, though where such incidents were clear, the results were adjusted. However, a surprisingly large number of clubs ran second XVs and though these were noted, they have **not** been included in the overall totals in Table 1, partly because some club reserve teams played under a separate name. Therefore, any such inflation of the figures might be roughly offset by the exclusion of these second teams. There is no doubt that many of the teams recorded were transitory and did not play regular matches throughout the season. However, distinguishing regular from transient teams is not easy since some regular clubs rarely featured in the press. Also, such teams were still an important part of the local rugby culture, even though they were transitory. It should also be pointed out, of course, that the activities of some, possibly many, teams never reached the columns of the local newspapers at all.

As noted by Metcalfe and Huggins in their studies of association clubs, there was a very high annual club turnover rate. As a result, except for a very limited number of major clubs, it proved impossible to trace the progress of individual teams over the period. Newspapers were surprisingly uninformative about the bewildering frequency with which clubs changed their names, merged, split, disbanded and reformed. Bassett's useful account of early rugby

[12] For the period January to June 1891, the *Western Mail* was not available at the time the research was undertaken and so was replaced by that paper's evening publication, the *Evening Express*, which at this time had broadly the same level of coverage of local rugby as its sister paper. In addition, the figures for the first three seasons up to 1872-3 include the references to Tredegarville and the "Cardiff Club" located in the *Football Annuals* 1871 to 1873 and the *Cardiff and Glamorgan Guardian* 1870 and which were discussed in an earlier chapter; *Football Annual* 1871 p. 69, 1872 p. 66, 1873 p. 80; *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* 24 Dec. 1870. The number of teams recorded in 1899-1900 may have been affected by the greatly reduced press coverage of sport during the South African War.

in Barry reveals just how complex the process of club turnover could be. Unfortunately, his is the only study of its kind in the Cardiff area.[13]

Nevertheless, no other similar detailed study of Welsh club rugby has ever been undertaken and it is believed that, despite the limitations of the data, they are sufficiently reliable to make generalisations and draw conclusions about the extent and the nature of club rugby in Cardiff and Wales in the late Victorian period.

Table 1 and Figure 1 on the following pages suggest there were five phases of the development of the game in Cardiff during the study period.

1870-1 to 1876-7. In this phase, the game was initially established in the town. The number of clubs never reached double figures and rugby was played only by an elite minority.

1877-8 to 1883-4. This was a period of slow but gradual growth, as the game began to gain some popularity and reach out to the lower middle and working classes.

1884-5 to 1889-0. During these five years, the game took off. It was a period of rapid growth with the number of teams increasing five times in as many years. Both the success and style of play of Hancock's team in 1885-6 had an impact particularly with the numbers of school and street teams in following seasons. Working men were now playing in large numbers.

1890-1 to 1896-7. This was the high summer for Cardiff (and Welsh) rugby teams in terms of their complete domination of the sporting culture. Wales secured their first victory over England in 1890 and in 1893 they won their first triple crown. Cardiff were playing attractive rugby against the best sides in the country. The number of teams consolidated at

[13] Alan Metcalfe, 'Football in the Mining Communities of East Northumberland 1882-1914', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 5, 3 (1988), p. 274; M. Huggins, 'The Spread of Association Football in North-East England, 1876-90: The Pattern of Diffusion', *IJHS*, 6, 3 (1989), p. 303; Michael G. Bassett, *Games of Interchanging Praise: A Centenary History of Rugby Football in Barry* (Barry, 1988), pp. 10-30.

an average of over two hundred each season. Working-class players dominated in terms of playing numbers.

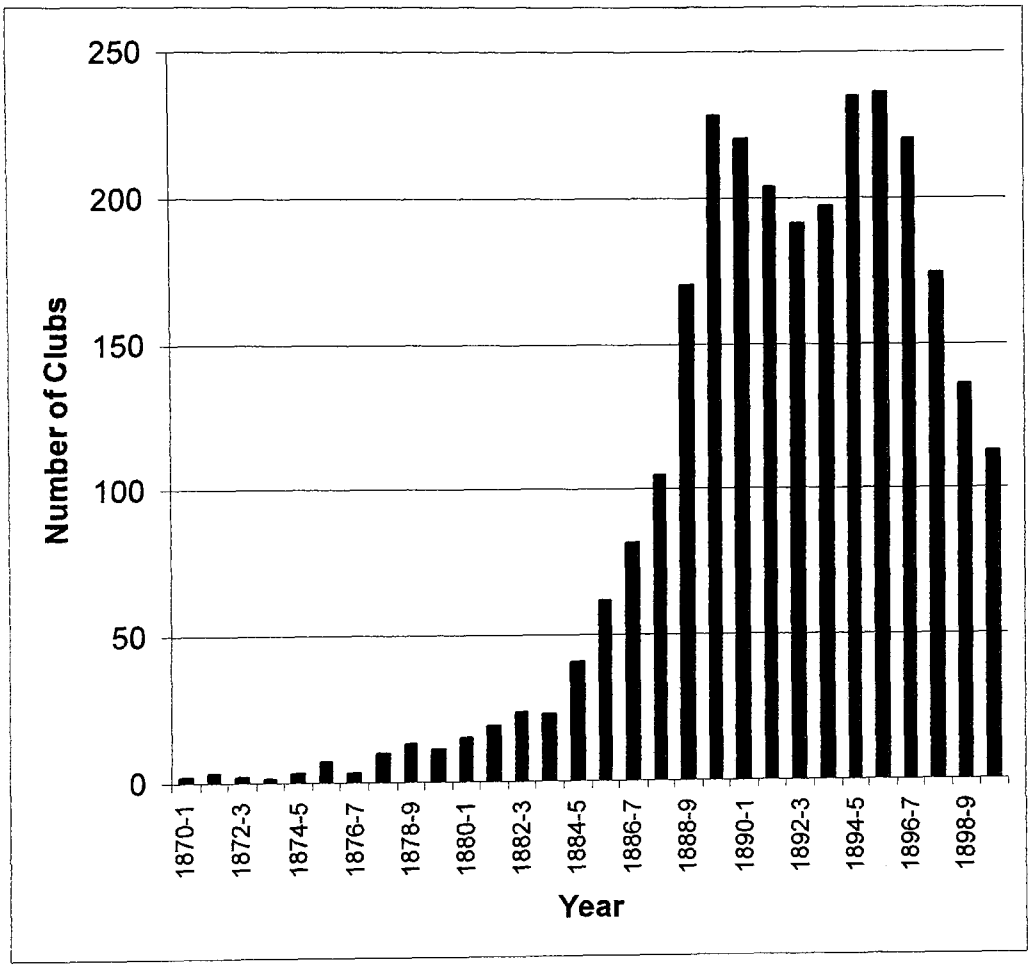
1897-8 to 1899-1900. In the previous phase, the game had probably reached saturation which could not be sustained, so the final years of the century saw a process of rationalisation with some contraction, though the number of clubs was still substantial. For the first time, rugby faced serious competition from association football, which was at last beginning to attract adherents.

Table 1: Cardiff and District Rugby Teams Recorded in Local Press[14]

Phase	Year	Church	Work	Public House	School	Street	Other	Misc.	Total
Initial Establish -ment	1870-1						2		**2**
	1871-2				2		1		**3**
	1872-3				1		1		**2**
	1873-4						1		**1**
	1874-5				1		2		**3**
	1875-6				3		4		**7**
	1876-7						3		**3**
Slow Growth	1877-8				2		7	1	**10**
	1878-9	1	1		3		7	1	**13**
	1879-0				2		7	2	**11**
	1880-1				2		13		**15**
	1881-2				3		16		**19**
	1882-3	1	1		2	1	18	1	**24**
	1883-4		2	2	2	2	14	1	**23**
Rapid Growth	1884-5		5	4	3	4	21	4	**41**
	1885-6	2	9	2	4	8	34	3	**62**
	1886-7	4	3	1	12	8	52	2	**82**
	1887-8	6	7	2	13	11	60	6	**105**
	1888-9	16	19	4	10	19	97	5	**170**
	1889-0	10	25	7	19	40	115	12	**228**
Consolid -ation	1890-1	15	26	8	16	41	105	9	**220**
	1891-2	11	25	7	6	33	115	7	**204**
	1892-3	11	28	1	7	38	100	6	**191**
	1893-4	22	29	5	3	31	100	7	**197**
	1894-5	17	35	6	6	25	136	10	**235**
	1895-6	25	43	7	2	23	125	11	**236**
	1896-7	22	24	4	7	27	129	7	**220**
Rational -isation	1897-8	19	21	2	4	18	104	6	**174**
	1898-9	14	13	1	3	8	86	11	**136**
	1899-0	12	4		4	7	79	8	**114**

[14] Compiled from *SWDN* and *WM*. See footnote 12.

Figure 1: Annual Numbers of Cardiff and District Rugby Teams[15]



[15] Compiled from *SWDN* and *WM*. See footnote 12.

Perhaps the most important causal factor of the growth of the game, particularly in the 1880s and 1890s when the population of Cardiff doubled, was the dramatic demographic changes which occurred in the area and which are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Population of Cardiff and District 1871-1901[16]

Census Year	Cardiff	Penarth and Barry	Total
1871	57,400	3,600	61,000
1881	82,800	6,700	89,500
1891	128,900	25,700	154,600
1901	164,300	41,200	205,500

By themselves, these figures do not adequately explain the growth in clubs – why would Cardiff's many new citizens necessarily take up rugby? Indeed, the eventual establishment of association football in Cardiff was at least partly the result of the efforts of migrants from soccer playing areas of England and Scotland. Nevertheless, with rugby clearly instituted as the first sport of both working and middle classes in the town by the 1880s, it offered an immediate opportunity for immigrants to identify with their new community and to integrate into its social life. As Smith and Williams have shown, rugby helped in-migrants to develop a sense of their Welsh identity[17]. At the same time and at the urban level, it also provided newcomers – through their allegiance to their town team – with a sense of *local* pride and of belonging to their adopted place. Holt argues that the supreme appeal of (association) football lay in its expression of civic pride and identity. The massive expansion of Britain's towns created new problems of identity for their inhabitants. He argues that, as far as *playing* football was concerned, the neighbourhood was all important and this is confirmed by this research. But the inhabitants of streets were also the citizens of new cities and they also needed a cultural expression of their urbanism which went beyond

[16] Extracted from John Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics*, Volume 1 (Cardiff, 1985), pp. 62-4.
[17] David Smith and Gareth Williams, *Fields of Praise: The Official History of the Welsh Rugby Union* 1881-1981 (Cardiff, 1980), pp. 103-4.

the immediate ties of family and locality.[18] What was true of the English centres of professional soccer was just as true of the rugby playing towns of south Wales, in particular Cardiff.

Before undertaking the analysis, it might be useful here to consider the position of association football in the town. In contrast to most other parts of Britain, there was very little organised soccer in south Wales before the mid 1890s.[19] With only a tiny handful of association teams in Cardiff during the 1880s, rugby was able to "take-off" with virtually no competition.

It is a widely held view, even in rugby reference books, that Cardiff began life as an association club but press reports of 1876 make it clear that the new club was formed to play rugby. Both Cardiff's forerunners, Glamorgan and the Wanderers were also rugby clubs and there is no hint of their ever having played association. It is difficult to establish where this persistent myth originated as there is absolutely no contemporary evidence for it. Detailed articles published in 1892 on the origins of the Welsh clubs referred to the possibility that Swansea and Newport may have had soccer roots but no such suggestion was made about Cardiff. Nor does either of the club's two official histories, the first of which was written in 1908, make any reference to this erroneous claim. [20]

Founded in 1881-2, St. Margaret's was the first association club in Cardiff. For a number of years, it was Cardiff's *only* club and often had difficulty in finding opponents, even relying on the rugby club to give them a game, which they lost.[21] Such was the lack of

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[18] Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 166-7.
[19] See Brian Lile and David Farmer, 'The Early Development of Association Football in South Wales , 1890-1906', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion,* (1984), pp.193-215.
[20] *WM* 8-23 Sept. 1876; J.R. Jones, *The Encyclopaedia of Rugby Football* (London, 1960), p. 24 claims Cardiff was founded as an association football club and then turned to rugby in 1876. Since this was one of the earliest rugby reference books, used by many later rugby writers, it may be the source of the widely reported but inaccurate account of Cardiff's origins. *Cardiff Times* 1 Oct. 1892 (Swansea); *SWDN* 31 Oct. 1892 (Newport); *Cardiff Times* 3 Sept. 1892 (Cardiff); C.S. Arthur, *The Cardiff Rugby Football Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1906* (Cardiff, 1908); D.E. Davies, *Cardiff Rugby Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1975: "The Greatest"* (Cardiff, 1975).
[21] *SWDN* 16 Jan. 1882, *WM* 17 Jan. 1882. In later seasons, they also played both Penarth and Cardiff Harlequins.

interest that a supporter informed the local press in 1883 that it was "useless to form a club in Cardiff" unless other clubs were set up in the neighbourhood. A Birmingham migrant complained shortly afterwards that "since coming to Cardiff I have not found one club playing the Association game."[22] When North Wales played the South in 1884, the most southerly players came from Welshpool and Oswestry. Following the one-all draw with England in 1885, "Old Stager" remarked that in south Wales, "Association football is almost, if not entirely, at a discount."[23] In 1887, he reported *some* growth, but it was rather minimal. However, when he wrote there were "no fewer than four clubs" in Cardiff, there were over eighty rugby teams in the town.[24] Some months later, three of the clubs amalgamated to form the first Cardiff AFC.[25] This venture, however, had little success and it soon folded.

Two years later in 1889, the town still had only four soccer clubs.[26] However, on one Monday in the same season, the local press reported forty-two rugby matches involving seventy-seven Cardiff district teams playing the previous Saturday.[27] A local football handbook for 1890-1 contains the fixture lists of seventy Welsh rugby teams, (thirty-seven of which were from Cardiff), but St. Margaret's First and Second XIs were the only soccer teams included. At a time when the game was booming elsewhere, it was just being kept alive in Cardiff by a handful of enthusiasts. Looking back ten years later, one official recalled the difficulty he had in 1891 in finding shopkeepers who could supply balls for his new club. "To carry one of those funny round balls through the streets ... [was to run] the gauntlet of curious onlookers".[28]

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[22] *WM* 9 Nov. 1883 (lack of interest); *WM* 15 Nov. 1883 (Birmingham).
[23] Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, ' "The New Craze": football and society in north-east Wales, c.1870-90', *Welsh History Review*, 22, 2 (2004), pp 302-3 (South team); *SWDN* 16 Mar. 1885 (England draw).
[24] *SWDN* 25 Mar. 1887. See Appendix 3 for a list of rugby teams in Cardiff in 1886-7.
[25] *SWDN* 28 Nov. 1887; *WM* 5 Dec. 1887. The soccer clubs were St. Margaret's (Roath), Cardiff Scottish, Cardiff Villa and White Star. The latter three formed Cardiff AFC.
[26] *WM* 16 Dec. 1889. They were St. Margaret's, St. Saviour's (Splott), Western Mail and Cardiff Scottish.
[27] *SWDN* 25 Nov. 1889; *WM* 25 Nov. 1889.
[28] *Cardiff and South Wales Footballer's Companion: 1890-91* (Cardiff, 1890), pp. 3-67; Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* (Brighton, 1981), p. 31; *Evening Express* 29 Apr. 1901.

In the early 1890s, the local organisation of the game was still poor. "The isolated effort [in Cardiff] ... to awaken interest in the association game, has not so far been attended with any large measure of success." "Socker Player" from London complained in 1891 that he could never find any information about league matches in south Wales whilst "Association Enthusiast" responded, "The game has not yet attained too great popularity in Wales ... It is only recently that any interest has been taken". The South Wales League was established in 1890-1, but it was not well organised. Of the thirteen teams entered, only seven remained by the end of the season. The sole Cardiff representatives, St. Margaret's, played only one league match, prompting one correspondent to comment, "they might as well not be in it". Cardiff AFC then reformed in August 1891. However, they received virtually no gate money and, in 1896, the club collapsed after being expelled from the Western League for failing to complete their fixtures.[29]

Against this background of initial indifference and poor organisation, therefore, rugby in Cardiff, and in south Wales generally, had virtually a free run for over twenty years. But interest did at last begin to stir during the later 1890s. Even though there was not a great deal of local soccer to report initially, the *SWDN* began to give greater coverage to the English game, particularly after the formation of the Football League in 1888. Cardiff's elementary and higher grade schools started taking up the game from around 1895, as a result of the influence of teachers who had been educated at soccer-playing training colleges.[30] The continuing flow of migrants to Cardiff in the 1890s also included many newcomers who had already acquired a love of soccer before they arrived.[31] In 1893, the *SWDN* observed, "The Geordies and Caledonians, "Sockers" to a man, who hold aloof from the [Arms] Park nowadays will suffice to keep the other game going."[32] The number of association teams in Cardiff began to grow steadily from around 1893-4 but, nevertheless,

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[29] *SWDN* 27 Oct. 1890 (isolated effort); *SWDN* 29 Jan. (Socker Player), 31 Jan. 1891 (Enthusiast); Peter Corrigan, *100 Years of Welsh Soccer: The Official History of the Football Association of Wales* (Cardiff, [1976]), p. 10 (league); *SWDN* 8 Apr. 1891 (St. Margaret's); *WM* 7 Aug. 1891 (CAFC); *WM* 5 Mar. 1894, *SWDN* 5 Mar. 1894 (gate money); *SWDN* 17 Jan. 1896 (expulsion).

[30] *WM* 8 Oct. 1894.

[31] *SWDN* 27 Oct. 1890. Almost all of the St. Margaret's players learned the game outside Wales.

[32] *SWDN* 4 Dec. 1893; see also Martin Johnes, 'That Other Game: A Social History of Soccer in South Wales c.1906-39' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1998), pp. 17-18.

the game still lagged behind in popularity. By 1900, there were probably as many soccer teams in Cardiff as there were rugby teams, although many of these were junior clubs and at this time there were no "first class" soccer outfits. Attendances at club rugby matches in Cardiff at the end of the century still far outstripped those at soccer. As Johnes puts it, association football was not "able to claim such a pivotal role in working-class culture" as rugby. However, he also shows, it was during the following decade that soccer quickly began to rival rugby's pre-eminence.[33]

Analysis of Cardiff's Clubs

If it is difficult to calculate the number of teams accurately, then any attempt to analyse and categorise them reliably is subject to even more limitations. Research into nineteenth-century English soccer and rugby has identified the existence of teams with a variety of origins, including workplaces, churches and chapels, public houses, schools, cricket clubs, streets and local communities.[34] But, as Russell reminds us, such categories are inevitably loose and overlapping, while Johnes advises caution when assuming that a link with an institution is necessarily suggested by a club name.[35] Therefore, any attempt to allocate Cardiff's rugby clubs in this way cannot be undertaken with complete confidence and any conclusions drawn from this analysis must take such limitations into account. Despite the difficulties of this approach, the writer is nevertheless confident that the findings are sufficiently robust to make comparisons with earlier studies and to draw generalised conclusions.

Drawing partly on the unpublished research of Molyneux on cricket and soccer in Birmingham between 1871 and 1884, Mason refers to three particular pre-existing institutions which played an important part in the origin of soccer clubs: these were

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[33] Johnes, *Soccer and Society*, p. 3, passim; Johnes, 'Other Game' passim.
[34] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* (Brighton, 1981), pp. 21, 24-31; Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 150-1; Huggins, 'Spread of Association Football', pp. 311-112; Stuart Barlow, 'The Diffusion of 'Rugby' Football in the Industrialized Context of Rochdale, 1868-1890: A Conflict of Ethical Values', *IJHS*, 10, 1 (1993), pp. 61-5.
[35] Dave Russell, *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1995* (Preston, 1997), pp. 14-15; Johnes, 'Other Game', p. 88.

churches and chapels; public houses; and workplaces[36]. However, in the case of Cardiff rugby, none of these three was as significant. The research appears to support Holt who emphasises the importance of locally organised neighbourhood teams.[37] There is no evidence that Cardiff was noticeably different from the rest of south Wales in this respect.

However, before justifying this, it is first necessary to comment on the issue of "junior" clubs. The term was used throughout the period in a loose and sometimes confusing way. As a result, no attempt has been made to categorise these separately. Many clubs described themselves as such, for example, Canton Juniors and Roath Juniors. Whilst these were probably boys or youths teams, they were not all necessarily so. Sometimes the term was used merely to distinguish the club from a more senior one in the locality. Adult sides are often described as "junior" clubs in the contemporary press and indeed, until recently, the Welsh Junior RU (now the Welsh Districts RU) was the name of the body representing adult clubs not in membership of the WRU. Sometimes "junior" was used to describe a club's second XV, but the existence of a junior club in a locality did not necessarily mean that team was attached to a senior one. Usually they were separately run organisations (e.g. Cardiff Juniors were unconnected with Cardiff FC). The issue is further complicated by those many juvenile teams which did not incorporate junior into their title (e.g. Melingriffith Stars).

During the 1889-91 seasons, the age profiles of fourteen local clubs (only three of which, incidentally, described themselves as "junior") were given in the local press: Bute Engineers Second XV (15-16); Cardiff Juniors (16); Canton Rovers (11-13); Clyde Rovers (15); Criterion (14-16); Grangetown Red Stars (15-17); Llandaff Yard Stars (14); Longcross Juniors (13-14); Melingriffith Stars (12-16); Railway Street Crusaders (12); Rennie Stars (10-12); Saltmede Rangers (14); Star Juniors (13-14); and Tongwynlais White Stars (14-15).[38] The ages here range from ten to seventeen, so there appears to have been no attempt to standardise formal age groups. Presumably clubs arranged fixtures as best as

[36] Mason, *Association Football and English Society,* pp. 24-31.
[37] Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 150-1 also draws on the research of Molyneux on Birmingham, as well as that of Tranter on Stirling, Crump on Leicester and Rees on Liverpool.

they could with those of a similar profile. However, matches between boys or youths teams and adult clubs were not uncommon. Westcott reports a game in 1892 involving Cardiff Police which the boys of Penarth United won.[39]

It might be assumed that, by their very nature, such teams would have been ephemeral and not organised on a regular basis. But some, at least, were as well organised as their adult counterparts. Despite an average age of only fifteen, Clyde Rovers had a published list of twenty-six fixtures, only some of which appear to have been against other junior teams. Canton Rovers (11-13) played and won twenty-two fixtures in 1889-90, and were also undefeated during the following season, when their secretary was then only fourteen years old. In 1889-90, Railway Street Crusaders (12) not only appointed a captain and vice-captain but also a secretary and treasurer. The independence of these sometimes very young Victorian rugby footballers contrasts strongly with modern practice of close supervision of junior players. [40]

As early as 1877-8, there are references to under fifteen matches played by Cardiff against Newport and Roath.[41] Evidence of the organisation of junior matches is very hard to locate but an 1879 example from Newport, where the captain of the winning team was only twelve, reveals a surprising degree of sophistication.

> To such a height has the rage for football grown that in most of the schools of the town have clubs been formed, and these juveniles draft regulations, send out challenges ... to play a match on a given date with all the formalities attendant upon clubs whose members embrace those of riper years. Only on Saturday two school clubs ... styled Green versus Chandler [played each other]. A field had been engaged ... the ground properly marked out, goal posts erected, a systematic plan of battle arranged with captain, backs, quarter backs, half backs, three quarter backs and forwards regularly drawn out.[42]

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[38] At least six were street teams: Clyde, Longcross, Railway, Rennie, Saltmede, and (probably) Star.
[39] *SWDN* and *WM* 1889 to 1891; Gordon Westcott, *A Century on the Beat: A History of Police Rugby Football in the South Wales Constabulary Area* (Bridgend, 1992), p. 91.
[40] *Cardiff and South Wales Footballer's Companion: 1890-91*, p. 46 (Clyde); *SWDN* 19 Jan., 13 Apr. 1891, (Canton); *SWDN* 1 Nov. 1889 (Crusaders).
[41] *WM* 24 Dec. 1877 (Newport), 3 Jan. 1878 (Roath).

There is no reason to suppose that such arrangements were at all unusual throughout Wales. Holt reminds us that Victorian Britain was a very young society with about a third of the population under fourteen, so it is no surprise, therefore, that many of the clubs catered for young players. From 1896-7, Cardiff FC successfully instituted an age restricted junior cup competition, which regularly attracted entries from around sixteen teams, with the final being played at Cardiff Arms Park. In addition an under nineteen league was organised by Cardiff and District FU in 1899.[43]

Undoubtedly, the personnel of junior clubs must have overlapped with those of school teams. As shown in an earlier chapter, the role of schools in the early development of rugby in Wales was crucial. Private schools in the locality were heavily involved throughout this period and made a significant contribution to the game. Monkton House, in particular, was highly regarded as a rugby nursery for Cardiff. Several Welsh internationals began their playing career at such institutions, for example, Frank Hill, George Young and William Cope (Monkton House); Albert Hybart and Norman Biggs (Cardiff Collegiate); and Percy Bush (St. Mary's Hall and Penarth Collegiate). The Wesleyan School also produced several prominent Cardiff players, including at least two internationals, Percy Bennett (Cardiff Quins) and Sid Nicholls and probably his brother Gwyn Nicholls.[44]

However, it was not until 1885-6 that the elementary schools, which educated children up to the age of fourteen, began to have any noticeable influence in Cardiff rugby. That they had any influence at all during the nineteenth century appears to have been previously unrecognised. Carl French has conducted the only research so far into schoolboy rugby in Wales, but since he was primarily concerned with the establishment of the Welsh Schools RU in 1903, he did not make any systematic study of the earlier period. Indeed, he implies that there was little rugby played in the elementary schools at this time because of the lack of school playing fields and because of the emphasis placed on physical drill rather than

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[42] *SWDN* 10 Mar. 1879.
[43] Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 141; *SWDN* 22 Oct. 1896 (Cardiff cup).
[44] *WM* 30 June 1894 (nursery); *SWDN* 28 Nov. 1884 (Hill); *Evening Express* 15 Sept. 1888 (Young); *WM* 19 Mar. 1892 (Cope); *SWDN* 20 Nov. 1882 (Hybart); *SWDN* 17 Oct. 1884 (Biggs); *Evening Express* 6 Apr. 1901 (Bush); *Evening Express* 5 Jan. 1891 (Wesleyan).

organised games.[45] However, discussing the forthcoming 1888-9 rugby season, the *Cardiff Argus* reported, "Every school in the neighbourhood has now its football club among its students and those belonging to different schools often have matches arranged between them".[46]

At least twenty-three elementary school rugby teams can be identified from the mid 1880s onwards.[47] Whether these were officially organised by the school is not clear, but the likelihood is that they were largely run by the boys themselves, as suggested by the earlier Newport example. Certainly, their opponents were not always restricted to other school sides. But it is evident that, far from there being little or no elementary school rugby in Cardiff in the nineteenth century, there was actually a considerable amount. It may be no co-incidence that the number of school teams playing the game increased markedly in 1886-7, the season which followed "Hancock's year," Cardiff's most successful season.[48]

Cardiff's first secondary school, which catered for pupils aged twelve to seventeen, also played rugby. The recent biography of Gwyn Nicholls suggests that he may have attended Cardiff Higher Grade School at Howard Gardens. However, Parry-Jones argues that Nicholls could not have learned his rugby there, since it was a soccer school. This conclusion is understandable since the voluminous school history claims that football was first played there only in 1896 and that the code adopted then was association. However, this research has established that, within weeks of opening in 1885, the Higher Grade was turning out rugby teams. It continued to do so throughout our period and there is no evidence in the press of soccer being played at the school before 1896. Whether or not Gwyn Nicholls was an old boy, the Higher Grade produced a Welsh international before

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[45] Carl French, 'The History of the Welsh Schools Rugby Union 1903-1939' (M.Ed. thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1991), pp. 1-52.
[46] *Cardiff Argus* 26 Sept. 1888.
[47] The elementary schools whose matches were reported in the *WM* and *SWDN* between 1885-6 and 1896-7 included: Adamsdown, Albany Road, Canton, Cathays, Court Road, Cogan, Crwys Road , Eleanor Street, Grange, Llandough, Radnor Road, St. David's RC, St. John's, St. Mary's, St. Paul's RC, Severn Road, South Church Street, Splottlands, Stacey Road, Taffs Well, Whitchurch Board, Whitchurch National and Wood Street.
[48] See Table 1.

him in Frank Mills (Swansea and Cardiff), a distinction unrecorded in the school history. From 1896-7, Penarth County School also begin to appear in press rugby reports.[49]

School teams made up only a small percentage of the total number of clubs, though their impact on the game in Cardiff, through the development of players, would have been much greater, of course, than implied by the figures in Table 1.

One of the few Cardiff soccer clubs playing in the early 1890s was Cardiff Teachers AFC. Their existence should have been a warning to the rugby authorities that soccer would eventually be taken up in the schools. For the first time in over ten years, there were no elementary school rugby matches mentioned in the press in 1895-6, and it cannot be a co-incidence that the first reported schoolboy soccer took place that season. Shortly afterwards, a Cardiff Schools Association League was established, on the initiative of the Cardiff Teachers club. By 1899-1900, eleven schools were taking part and there was also a seven team schools league in Barry and Penarth. Rugby had clearly failed to take advantage of the lead it had built up in Cardiff's schools and it allowed the initiative to pass to the rival code, at least for the time being. This represented a major capture by soccer in Cardiff and it contributed greatly to the subsequent growth of the game there. In 1900, it was being claimed that the league had done much to promote association in Cardiff. It may be significant that when Barry County School and Cardiff High School opened in 1896 and 1898 respectively, they both initially played soccer. Holt argues that in England at this time, middle-class schools tended to shun soccer because of its popularity with the working class: perhaps these two schools similarly distanced themselves from the prevailing popular sport, in this case rugby.[50] In response to the growing interest in soccer amongst local youngsters, Cardiff FC donated a cup for competition for boys under seventeen in 1896: "a

[49] David Parry-Jones, *Prince Gwyn: Gwyn Nicholls and the First Golden Era of Welsh Rugby* (Bridgend, 1999), p. 20; T.J. Foster, *Floreat Howardia: The Story of Howard Gardens Schools Cardiff 1885-1990* (Cardiff, 1990), pp. 27, 50-1; *SWDN* 4 Jan. 1896 (Mills).

[50] Lile and Farmer, 'Early Development of Association in South Wales', p. 204-5; *SWDN* 5 May 1900 (Cardiff league); *SWDN* 19 Dec. 1899 (Barry and Penarth); Bassett, *Rugby Football in Barry*, p. [130]; Gwyn Prescott, *The Best and Happiest Team: A History of Cardiff High School Old Boys Rugby Football Club 1929-1978* (Cardiff, 1979), p. 1; Richard Holt, 'Working-Class Football and the City: The Problem of Continuity', *British Journal of Sports History*, 3, 1 (1986), p. 11.

step in the right direction and one that should be followed in other districts." However, not until 1902 was the Cardiff Schools RU formed and, whilst it was a very healthy child with twenty-three schools playing in three divisions, the initial overwhelming advantage had undoubtedly been surrendered. Local rugby administrators had clearly failed to take heed of the *Western Mail*'s warning as early as 1894 that "Association legislators are a bit energetic and only need half a chance to find their way to the front".[51]

Mason suggests that almost a quarter of soccer clubs in England may have owed their origin to religious organisations. The percentage in Cardiff rugby, however, was considerably lower than this, at around 10% in most years in the 1890s, the highest being 11% in 1893-4. It should also be remembered that, as Holt suggests, "parish" teams may often have been in reality neighbourhood clubs run without any particular church involvement. Throughout south Wales, the number of clubs with religious affiliation or foundation was relatively small. Unlike English soccer and rugby league, there are no examples in Wales of major rugby clubs with church or chapel origins. The first church name to appear in Cardiff was St. John's Canton in 1878-9 but such early references were rare, though by the 1890s church based teams became more common. From the mid 1890s, the numbers were boosted by Boys Brigade, Church Lads Brigade and YMCA teams.[52]

Of course, there may have been some clubs whose connection with a church was not evident in their name and who are not therefore included in the totals, but this would also apply to the data collected in earlier research. These figures suggest, therefore, that "muscular Christians" were not as prominent in Cardiff rugby. Dunning and Sheard, and also Adair, argue that church groups may have regarded soccer as more "civilised" which might explain their reluctance to reach out to the working class by establishing rugby clubs. Gareth Williams argues that far from curbing disorderly behaviour and violence, rugby could incite it. It could also encourage drinking. For these reasons then, Morgan contends, some nonconformists in particular were sceptical about the "moralizing influence" of the

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[51] *SWDN* 22 Oct. 1896, 10 Feb. 1897 (Cardiff cup); *Cardiff Schools Rugby Union Handbook Season 1987-88* (Cardiff, 1987), p. [4]; *WM* 24 Jan. 1894 (association legislators).
[52] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, p. 26; Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 150-1.

game. In his study of Rochdale rugby, Barlow points to the game's intrinsic violence as a deterrent to missionary zeal. He also reveals that Rochdale rugby was remarkably similar to Cardiff when he concludes that churches provided "a significant, though *relatively minor* input into the diffusion of the sport." However, Adair's argument that "the class based nature" of rugby alienated working-class parishioners, causing muscular Christians to abandon rugby, cannot explain the church's relatively low level of involvement in the socially democratic game played in Cardiff and south Wales.[53]

The majority of the religious institution teams in Cardiff were connected with the Church of England, for example, St. Andrew's (who produced Welsh international Bert Winfield), St. Mary's and St. German's, but increasingly in our period we see the emergence of Roman Catholic parish teams, which were to have, and indeed still do have, a strong and distinctive influence on the strength and character of Cardiff rugby. Cardiff's large Irish community was overwhelmingly working-class and its origin lay in the flood of immigrants who arrived during and immediately after the Famine in the 1840s and 1850s. Their life was largely one of squalor and poverty but by the late 1880s, living conditions had improved sufficiently for their descendants to be able to take up sport in their spare time.[54] The first Catholic club, St. David's, appeared in 1887-8 and, within a couple of years, it had become one of the strongest in Cardiff and had joined the WFU. Amongst its playing membership were many with Irish surnames, though these would have been mostly Welsh born, since large scale Irish immigration had ceased by this time.[55] Dai Fitzgerald was the most prominent product of this club and was twice capped by Wales from Cardiff in 1894. Although born in Cardiff, he was often referred to in the press as an Irishman and it was rumoured that the Irish selectors were interested in him. He was not the only St. David's

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[53] Daryl Adair, 'Competing or Complementary Forces: The 'Civilising' Process and the Commitment to Winning in Nineteenth Century English Rugby and Association Football', *Canadian Journal of History of Sport,* XXIV, 2 (1993), p. 54; Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (London, 2005 edn.), pp. 120-3; Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That: Essays on Rugby Football, Sport and Welsh Society* (Llandysul, 1991), pp. 73-4; Gareth Morgan, 'Rugby and Revivalism: Sport and Religion in Edwardian Wales', *IJHS*, 22, 3 (2005), p. 435; Barlow, 'The Diffusion of 'Rugby' Football', pp. 54, 63 (italics added).

[54] J.V. Hickey, 'The Origin and Growth of the Irish Community in Cardiff' (M.A. thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1959), p. 113.

[55] Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: The Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2002), p. 105.

man to join Cardiff, as by 1891-2 there were five playing for the senior club and it appears that these and other defections led to the club disbanding.[56] But St. David's was replaced by other strong Catholic parish teams like St. Paul's and St. Peter's, who would attract hundreds of supporters to their matches. Both became leading clubs in Cardiff during the 1890s.[57] St. Paul's, based in Newtown, one of Cardiff's early Irish settlements, were sometimes referred to as "the Irishmen" in match reports and their teams and officers were dominated by men with Irish surnames.[58]

There does not appear to have been any obvious religious divide in fixtures and, in any case, the establishment of leagues ensured this could not happen.[59] From the 1890s, "Cardiff Irishmen" were not only representing their town, but also Wales and consequently were becoming heroes of the wider community. After Dai Fitzgerald scored all the points in the 7-0 victory over Scotland in 1894, he was chaired by supporters through the streets of Cardiff.[60] Rugby allowed Cardiff's Irish, perhaps for the first time, to display visibly their commitment to their home town and to Wales.[61] An in depth study has not been undertaken here, but it appears that, though there was still antipathy and even occasional hostility to this community in general, rugby playing Catholics of Irish descent experienced nothing like the level of prejudice encountered by their soccer playing counterparts in Scotland.[62] Though ignored by Hickey in his study of the Irish in Cardiff, O'Leary briefly comments on rugby's role as a means of assisting the social integration and assimilation of the Irish

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[56] *SWDN* 30 Nov. 1891.
[57] See Appendix 5 for their competition successes.
[58] *WM* 21 Aug. 1897; *SWDN* 1 Aug. 1896, 5 Apr. 1899.
[59] For example, in 1896-7, St. Peter's completed their 24 match season without defeat. Almost all of their fixtures were against clubs with no obvious Catholic or Irish affiliation. *SWDN* 3 May 1897.
[60] *WM* 5 Feb. 1894.
[61] Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (London, 1998), p. 22; Anon., 'Some Famous Footballers: Cardiff Rugby Football Club', *St. Peter's Magazine*, V, 2 (1925), pp. 43-5.
[62] G.P.T. Finn, 'Racism, Religion and Social Prejudice: Irish Catholic Clubs, Soccer and Scottish Society – I The Historical Roots of Prejudice', *IJHS*, 8, 1 (1991), pp. 370-397; G.P.T. Finn, 'Racism, Religion and Social Prejudice: Irish Catholic Clubs, Soccer and Scottish Society – II Social Identities and Conspiracy Theories', *IJHS*, 8, 3 (1991), pp. 374-397; Daniel Burdsey and Robert Chappell, ''And If You know Your History ...' An Examination of the Formation of Football Clubs in Scotland and their Role in the Construction of Social Identity', *Sports Historian*, 20, 1 (2001), pp. 94-106.

into the wider community of both Cardiff and Wales.[63] The contribution of rugby to this process in Cardiff deserves much further study.

That there were also several teams with a nonconformist background in Victorian Cardiff comes as a surprise. The conventional view is that Welsh chapels were vehemently opposed to football and the research does not contest this, since there is plenty of evidence to support it. However, the research does possibly show that hostility may not always have been total.[64] Perhaps opposition to rugby was less strong in the larger urban centres, where a more tolerant attitude to sport may have prevailed, as Mason noted was the case in England. Gareth Morgan's study of the religious "Revival" of 1904-5 reveals that it had little impact on rugby in Cardiff.[65] The existence, during the 1880s and 1890s, of teams such as Bethany, Loudoun Wesleyans, Merthyr Street Mission, Presbyterians, Wesleyan Rovers, Wesleyans and Zion Harlequins is evidence of a greater level of tolerance than is often supposed.[66] However, these were almost certainly mainly junior sides and Wesleyans may have been the Wesleyan School team for whom Gwyn Nicholls first played.[67]

The extent of direct involvement of church officials in local rugby is now difficult to assess. The St. Peter's club history records that its first secretary in 1888-9 was also secretary of the Catholic Young Men's Society, while the earliest team photograph of 1896-7 includes the St. Peter's rector. This may indicate that the club had at least the approval of the parish church, though the extent of its support and involvement can only be guessed at. However, though Hickey makes no reference to sport in his study, he shows that local Catholic clergy took the lead in developing a range of parochial social activities and institutions. So their involvement in rugby may have been greater than mere approval. He also argues that such

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[63] Hickey, *The Irish Community,* passim; O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, pp. 304-5.
[64] Gareth Williams, 'From Popular Culture to Public Cliché: Image and Identity in Wales, 1890-1914' in J.A. Mangan, *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914* (London, 1988), pp. 132-3; Morgan, *Rugby and Revivalism*, pp. 435-6; John Lowerson, *Sport and the English middle classes, 1870-1914* (Manchester, 1993), p. 85 refers to a suggestion that rugby may have been unpopular with evangelicals because of their phobia about bodily contact.
[65] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, p. 25; Morgan, *Rugby and Revivalism*, pp. 449, 434-456.
[66] Andrew K. Hignell, *A 'Favourit' Game: Cricket in south Wales before 1914* (Cardiff, 1992), pp. 217-220 identifies one Congregationalist and six Wesleyan cricket clubs in Cardiff between 1875 and 1890.
[67] *SWDN* 9 Dec. 1889; *Evening Express* 5 Jan. 1891.

activities and institutions helped to unite the Irish community as they spread out into the districts and suburbs of the town. If parish rugby matches contributed to this, then presumably the clergy supported them. The pronounced attachment to rugby of Cardiff's Catholic schools and parishes, therefore, probably owes its origins to the clergy's conviction that the sport could contribute significantly to the wider acceptance of the Irish Catholic community. [68]

Hard evidence of the influence of Anglican clergy in Cardiff is also difficult to establish. Pentyrch, not a "church based" team as such and, in the nineteenth century at least, very much a village club, was founded in 1883 by the local schoolmaster and vicar, Morgan Thomas. A "muscular Christian", Reverend Thomas took his pupils to watch games at Pontypridd and was also keen on cricket.[69] Llandaff began using the Bishop's Field, which adjoins the Cathedral, in 1876 and since this land is owned by the Church, the club presumably played there with its blessing.[70] However, apart from Boys Brigade and Church Lads Brigade teams, it is quite likely that many church clubs were largely organised by their members for their own recreation, rather than by the clergy as an instrument of social control. As Collins appositely puts it, many operated "under little more than a flag of convenience".[71]

The number of workplace teams in Cardiff was never very substantial and they did not enjoy a high position in the rugby hierarchy. In most years from the mid 1880s, they comprised between 10 and 15% of the total, though in 1895-6, they accounted for 18%. However, many of these were not regular sides, playing perhaps a few fixtures or even only one. It was common for groups of employees to play together for charity and examples include: bakers, butchers, cabmen, clothiers, coal-trimmers, hairdressers, printers,

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[68] D.F. Childs, *One Hundred Years of the "Rocks": the History of St. Peter's R.F.C. 1886/1986* (Cardiff, 1986), pp. 8-9; Hickey, *The Irish Community*, pp. 130-8.
[69] Arthur Llewellyn and Don Llewellyn, *Pentyrch R.F.C.: A Club For All Seasons 1883-1983* (Pentyrch, 1983), pp. 8-12. Reverend Thomas's love of sport was passed on to his son, Horace Wyndham Thomas, who won two caps at outside-half for Wales in 1912-13 and was killed during the Battle of the Somme. *SWDN* 12 Sept. 1916.
[70] Anon., *Llandaff Rugby Football Club American Tour Souvenir* (Cardiff, 1968), p. 1.
[71] Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 138; Collins, *The Great Split*, p. 32.

publicans, sail-makers, shoemakers and theatre staff.[72] Though these were essentially ephemeral, their sheer range and number does support the argument that rugby was integral to the day-to-day life of the Victorian town. These games were not restricted to working men and occasionally employees in banks and the offices of merchants and ship-owners would organise games. Croll recognised a similar wide range of social classes participating in such matches in Merthyr.[73]

The extent and character of Victorian workplace teams depended, of course, on the structure of the town's economy. Cardiff's prosperity then was almost entirely based on its strategic position in the coal trade, on which many in the workforce, including those in the commercial sector, were dependent. Remarkably, there was little manufacturing in the town and most industrial activities were relatively small scale, so there was no equivalent, for example, of the Lancashire cotton mill. Most of the waterside labour force was casual and the dock company did not employ men directly.[74] This was not a good environment, therefore, for the creation of work-related clubs.

Cardiff's few industrial activities, however, were reflected in some of the teams of the time. These included the Dowlais Iron Company (Dowlais Magpies, Dowlais Iron Works); railway rolling stock manufacturers (Western Wagon Works, Gloucester Wagon Works); timber importers (Bland's Deal Carriers, Roath Saw Mills, Cardiff Steam Joinery); grain millers and brewers (Spillers, Anglo-Bavarian Brewery Rovers); paper manufacturers (Ely Paper Mill); engineering companies (Hill's Dry Dock, Tubal Cain Foundry); and tinplate manufacturers (Melingriffith).[75] None of these, however, had any significant impact on local rugby.

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[72] There were no teams of colliers, as Cardiff lies outside the coalfield. Coal-trimmers were dockworkers.
[73] Andrew J. Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture, Public Space and Urban Meaning, Merthyr c1870-1914* (PhD thesis, University of Wales Cardiff, 1997), p. 248.
[74] M.J. Daunton, 'Coal to Capital: Cardiff since 1839' in Prys Morgan (ed.), *Glamorgan County History, Volume VI, Glamorgan Society: 1780-1980* (Cardiff, 1988), pp. 216, 220. See also Appendix 6 for the occupational structure of Cardiff in 1891.
[75] See Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, pp. 37-49 and Rees, *History of Cardiff*, pp. 285-298 for details of Cardiff's main industries.

Of those workplace teams which enjoyed some longevity, the main occupational groups were shop assistants and uniformed employees like railway and post office workers and, to a lesser extent, the police. Mason noted that railwaymen often used their place of work around which to organise their soccer. They seem to have been active in Cardiff rugby too. Both the Taff Vale and the Great Western Railways had regular teams and there were also many instances of occasional matches involving various branches of these and other companies, including Barry Railway. Daunton points out that, unlike most dock workers, who were hired by a large number of employers for short periods, railwaymen tended to be employed permanently by one company.[76] This may explain why railway teams were more organised, played to a higher standard and survived longer than most other works teams.

In the mid nineteenth century, Cardiff replaced Bristol as the commercial centre for south Wales.[77] This too was reflected in the town's rugby culture. As Cardiff's service economy expanded to meet the demands of its hinterland, so too did the teams in this sector. The impact of the Saturday half-day on the growth of football has been well documented, but nevertheless many employed in service industries still had to work on Saturdays. However, in Cardiff they were not denied the opportunity of playing as there was a thriving Wednesday rugby scene. Some sides drew on groups of employees, for instance, a long established club, Cardiff Rovers, originated as Cardiff Drapers, whilst Cardiff Assistants and Cardiff Commercials accommodated shop-workers and office-workers generally. Other teams were restricted to one employer like the department stores David Morgan (Hayes) and James Howells (Wharton Wanderers) and the Post Office and Liptons Rovers. These players took their game seriously. Three of the twelve teams competing in the 1888-9 Cardiff Junior Cup (discussed later) were Wednesday clubs.[78] Mid-week rugby, however, was not restricted to specially organised works teams, as a number of clubs, like Cardiff Harlequins, also organised a regular Wednesday XV. Mid-week rugby was common throughout south Wales and in mining districts, Mabon's Day, a holiday for miners on the first Monday in the month, was a very popular football day.

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[76] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, p. 30; Daunton, *Coal to Capital*, p. 220.
[77] Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, pp. 53-4.
[78] Cardiff Rovers, Wharton Wanderers and Post Office.

The unique nature of Cardiff's narrow economic base was, therefore, an influential factor in determining the rather low incidence of regular workplace teams. They had little impact, with perhaps only the railway clubs providing any decent standard of regular rugby. It seems that the majority of workers preferred to play their rugby elsewhere. Significantly, there is no evidence of any employers providing pitches and accommodation.

There were very few identified public house teams in Cardiff and their numbers never reached double figures in any year. Of course, these must be distinguished from those clubs which used public houses as their headquarters and of which there were many. It is likely that pub teams like Globe Revellers, Cottage Rovers, Duke of Edinburgh, Rising Sun, Royal Oak and Rose and Crown were working-class in composition, since the pub was essentially a working-class institution. However, pub teams were not necessarily adult ones, as revealed by the existence of Criterion (14-16) in 1889-90 and Tredegar Arms Juniors in 1893-4. No doubt the establishment of pub teams often arose on the initiative of the landlord. For instance, the licensee of the Blue Anchor, whose team featured regularly, was Tom Cooke, a former player who in 1891 claimed to be the oldest member of Cardiff FC.[79]

Many of the first football clubs were founded by cricketers wanting to keep active during the winter months.[80] As shown earlier, cricketers were responsible for bringing football to Cardiff in the 1860s. A comparison of club team and membership lists reveals that, during the 1870s and 1880s, there were many examples of sportsmen who played for Cardiff at both cricket and rugby.[81] Whether cricket had any significant influence in the boom years of the 1880s and 1890s, however, is questionable. Hignell compiled a chronological list of the founding date of cricket clubs in south Wales from 1785 to 1890, so it is possible to compare this with the annual lists of Cardiff rugby clubs. There are over thirty examples (from 1819 to 1890) of a cricket club appearing before a similarly named rugby club.

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[79] *Welsh Athlete* 19 Oct., 2 Nov. 1891.
[80] For example, Edward Donovan and Others, *Pontypool's Pride: The Official History of Pontypool Rugby Football Club 1868-1988* (Abertillery, 1988), p. 9.
[81] W. Alan Thomas, *Cardiff Cricket Club: 1867-1967* (Cardiff, 1967), p. 20; Cardiff Cricket Club Members Lists 1883 and 1884.

However, merely sharing a name does not prove any relationship, whilst thirty out of many hundreds of rugby clubs represents only a small proportion. It is conceivable that, given rugby's popularity, the process was reversed, certainly from the 1880s. There is possibly some evidence for this, as Blue Anchor, Hayes, Radyr, Rookwood Rangers, and Star cricket clubs all appeared the season *after* similarly named rugby clubs.[82] Of course, there were always strong informal individual links between the two sports and a review of the press reports of cricket matches will identify many names of prominent and less prominent footballers.

Street teams were very common in our period. It is highly likely that the majority of these were junior teams, as only a few of them lasted for more than one season. Teams such as Arabella Rangers, Broadway Quins, Ethel Street, Glossop Road Rangers, Gold Street Rangers, Holton Crusaders (Barry), Louisa Street Stars, Ludlow Street, Merthyr Street Bruisers, Prince Leopold Street Juniors, Maughan Rovers (Penarth), System Blue Stars, Tin Street Rovers and many others enjoyed only a brief existence. It would have been natural for youngsters to form such highly localised teams and then, when they began to grow more financially and socially independent, move to clubs further away from their homes. Alternatively, as suggested by Holt, informal street teams may have developed into organised junior clubs like Clyde Juniors and Richmond Road Juniors who survived for several years, as did Charles Street Rangers and Tresillian Quins who appear to have evolved into adult clubs.[83] Nevertheless, from the late 1880s, there was a thriving, if constantly shifting, culture of street teams. There was no particular geographical concentration – street sides arose in all the working-class residential districts of the town, though there was only a handful recorded in the outlying areas, such as Philog Rovers and College Rovers in Whitchurch and Paradise Rovers in Rumney.

[82] Hignell, *A 'Favourit' Game*, pp. 217-220.
[83] Holt, 'Working-Class Football', p. 7.

Almost all the remaining clubs fall into the category of neighbourhood teams.[84] Holt stresses the significance of neighbourhood (and street) teams in two particularly important respects, both of which are applicable to Cardiff. Firstly, place-names, he argues, "underline the sustaining role of the neighbourhood in sport: despite vast changes in the city itself, loyalty to a street or parish was deeply held". Local teams could provide an uprooted population with a new sense of belonging and pride. Secondly, the establishment of such a range of clubs was "not the achievement of well-intentioned middle-class reformers; it was the work of the members, of the people themselves".[85]

This was easily the biggest category in Cardiff and Barlow found similar results in his study of Rochdale rugby.[86] Every residential district had its representatives: Roath, Canton, Butetown, Adamsdown, Splott, Cathays, Grangetown, Riverside, Blackweir, Ely, Llandaff, Llandaff North, Penylan, Rumney and Whitchurch. The game had also spread throughout the surrounding district to Barry, Cadoxton, Cogan, Dinas Powys, Penarth, Pentyrch and Taffs Well. Indeed, the outward spread of Cardiff in the last three decades of the nineteenth century can be traced in the emergence of its rugby clubs. With the proliferation of teams, many shared a neighbourhood name in their title and so were forced to find ways of distinguishing themselves. For example, between 1885 and 1900, there were at least thirty teams which included "Roath" as a prefix.[87]

In the naming of their clubs, Victorians were more inventive than their modern counterparts: they had to be, as there were so many clubs. The most popularly used names were adopted by Adamsdown Crusaders, Canton Wanderers, Cathays Excelsiors, Ely Rangers, Grangetown Stars, Heath Rovers, Moors United, Penarth Harlequins, Roath

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[84] Table 1 shows these as "Other" clubs. With the exception of Cardiff, Penarth and Cardiff Harlequins, which were "town" teams, all clubs in this category are assumed to have been essentially neighbourhood clubs. Barry does not really qualify a town club here for reasons explained in Bassett, *Rugby Football in Barry*, passim.

[85] Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 150-4.

[86] Barlow, 'The Diffusion of 'Rugby' Football', pp. 54, 64.

[87] They were Roath: Albion, Albion Juniors, Court, Crescents, Crusaders, Elm, Excelsiors, Harlequins, Hornets, Institute, Juniors, Marlborough, Park Juniors, Park Wanderers, Park United, Pouncers [sic], Ramblers, Raglans, Rangers, Star Juniors, Stars, Road, Rovers, Shamrocks, Wanderers, Waterloo, Wednesday, Wednesday Juniors, Windsors and United.

Windsors and Splott Raglans. Only slightly less common were the names chosen by Barry Victoria, Canton Lilywhites, Cathays Albions, Penarth Dreadnoughts, Riverside Warriors and Tongwynlais Ramblers. Some clubs dispensed with a local name altogether, for example, Bowry [sic] Boys, Green Fields of Erin, Harbour Lights and Maggie Murphy's Pups. Some clearly didn't take themselves too seriously, such as North Central Buffoons, Salmon Tin Rovers, Waistcoat Tearers and Alpine Rangers, who played at East Moors, the lowest and flattest part of the town. Black humour occasionally had its place too: during the Whitechapel Murders, the Jersey Rippers took part in a local nine-a-side tournament. Finally, going back to a tradition which originated at Rugby School, there were many neighbourhood teams which were simply named after the devices worn on their jerseys.[88] These included Blackweir Diamonds, Canton Red Anchor, Cathays Crescent, Grange Thistles, Harp of Erin Juniors and Roath Shamrocks; and – a surprisingly common practice – some which were named after flowers, such as Cogan White Rose, Grangetown Red Rose, Lily of the Valley, Wild Rose and White Lily. It has to be wondered, though, whether Llandaff Blossoms, Penarth Tulips and Tongwynlais Flowers were short lived because of recruiting difficulties. The existence of teams such as Green Fields of Erin, Harp of Erin, Canton Shamrocks, Roath Shamrocks, M'Ginty's Pups and Maggie Murphy's Pups not only provide further evidence of the strong participation of Cardiff's Irish but also show that not all of them played for parish teams.

There were many clubs which included "Cardiff" in their title, adopting, for instance, Alexandra, Crusaders, Hornets, Mohawks, Northern, Rangers, Star and United as a suffix. Whether these were based in a particular locality or were clubs which drew on a wider catchment area and social background is impossible to establish with certainty, though, given their fixture lists, the likelihood is that the majority were essentially neighbourhood clubs.

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[88] Jennifer Macrory, *Running with the Ball: The Birth of Rugby Football* (London, 1991), pp. 78-84. See Parry-Jones, *Prince Gwyn*, p. 96 for a photograph of Cardiff Stars c.1890 and which shows a very large star sewn on the jerseys.

There is one further, very small, group of miscellaneous clubs which are difficult to classify precisely. It includes military teams, in particular, the Welsh Regiment Depot and the Volunteers such as 2nd Glamorgan Artillery. The only representatives of higher education were University College and Cardiff Medicals. Occasional matches were played by various Liberal and Conservative Working Men's Clubs and the Barry Dock Buffalo Institute. A few clubs were established by special interest groups like Cardiff Cyclists and Old Monktonians. That this was the *only* example of a permanent "Old Boys" club is further evidence of the predominantly working-class nature of the game in Cardiff. Founded in 1894-5, they gave up any formal connection to Monkton House in 1913-14 when they became Glamorgan Wanderers, though they remained a somewhat socially exclusive club until after the Second World War. There must have been other clubs with a largely middle-class membership and Penylan and Kymin (Penarth) were probably examples. However, it is virtually impossible to identify them with certainty. Such clubs tended to eschew competition but there was no obvious attempt to create exclusive fixture lists.

To summarise, then, the analysis of Cardiff's Victorian rugby teams reveals a rather different picture from that found in earlier studies of soccer in England.[89] Whereas churches, workplaces and pubs were important institutions in the origin of many soccer clubs, the evidence is that their influence was much weaker in Cardiff rugby. Mason suggests that a "considerable proportion" of English soccer clubs owed their origins to organisations which were previously in existence for another purpose. However, in Cardiff rugby, the highest proportion that churches, workplaces and pubs accounted for *together* in any one season was only 32% in 1895-6, while in other years they were only around a quarter of the total or less. This may be explained, at least in part, by religious hostility to rugby and by Cardiff's distinct economic structure. The difference is further illustrated by a comparison with Huggins' work on the "place of association" of 193 soccer clubs in Teesside in 1888-9, shown in Table 3. [90] This reveals that Teesside, with 57%, had well over double the percentage of clubs in the three categories compared to Cardiff, which had only 23% in that season.

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[89] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, pp. 24-31.

Table 3: Comparison of Clubs in Teesside and Cardiff in 1888-9

Place of Association	Teesside Soccer Number	%	Cardiff Rugby Number	%
Workplace	53	27.5	19	11.2
Church/Chapel	46	23.8	16	9.4
Public Houses	12	6.2	4	2.3
Schools	20	10.4	10	5.9
Other	62	32.1	121	71.2
Total	193	100.0	170	100.0

However, location was of far greater significance. Barlow found that in Rochdale rugby, loyalty to the street or neighbourhood or parish was strongly held and that it was the working class, rather than religious or philanthropic members of the middle class, who were responsible for organising many of these local teams.[91] The evidence from Cardiff is similar. From 1880 onwards, neighbourhood and street teams comprised between approximately two-thirds and three-quarters of the total every season. This supports Holt's view that the impact of churches and employers was limited only to a minority and hence there was no effective middle-class imposition in the name of social control. Most clubs were based on the street or neighbourhood and were established and organised by and for working people. Tranter also points out that the profusion of local clubs confirms that the spread of football came about as much from efforts from below as from middle-class example and initiative. As Gareth Williams puts it, local teams in Wales "block-built identity upwards". [92] In Cardiff, there is no doubt that strong local allegiances were attracted to neighbourhood teams and these were largely working-class in origin and composition. Their emergence also began to influence the wider game, as will be shown.

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[90] Huggins, 'The Spread of Association Football', p. 311

[91] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, p. 21; Barlow, 'The Diffusion of 'Rugby' Football', pp. 61-5.

[92] Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 352-3; Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain, 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 29; Williams, *1905 and All That*, p. 74.

CHAPTER 4

'ADMINISTERED BY THE FEW, PLAYED BY THE MANY': ORGANISATION AND PARTICIPATION[1]

While local newspaper coverage of rugby expanded greatly during our period, the reports concentrated almost exclusively on match details. Very little is revealed about the way the game was administered and how matches were organised, *especially* at the local level, so we have to piece together what few clues are available.

Most of the clubs identified in this research were never affiliated to any union. However, as rugby became increasingly popular and competitive, there was an evident need for stronger control over its administration, particularly at a local level. Issues such as match disputes, foul play, crowd control, player transfer, referee appointments and demands for competitive structures all took on increasing importance during the 1890s. Only a very small number of the leading local sides joined the Welsh Football Union. Cardiff, of course, were founder members in 1881, while Penarth and Cardiff Harlequins joined in 1886. They were followed by Cardiff Star (1891), Llandaff (1891), St. David's (1891), Cathays (1892), Cogan (1892), Grangetown (1893), Barry (1895) and Whitchurch (1895 and 1898). Several of these participated in the Welsh Challenge Cup, which Llandaff won in 1892, after the senior clubs had ceased taking part. All eight, however, dropped out of the WFU at some point during the 1890s and, with the exception of Whitchurch, disbanded. Of all the many rugby clubs in the locality, only Cardiff and Penarth can claim continuous membership of the WRU from the nineteenth century.[2]

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[1] Gareth Williams, 'Community, Class and Rugby in Wales 1880-1914', *Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin*, 50, Spring, (1985), p. 11.
[2] WFU membership: *South Wales Daily News, Western Mail,* 1886-1895 and WFU minutes 1892-1902 passim; *SWDN* 28 Mar. 1892 (Llandaff win Welsh Challenge Cup).

A Cardiff District Football Union was established in 1886, solely to administer the Cardiff Challenge Cup[3] and the Cardiff Junior Cup[4]. It was a requirement that clubs wishing to compete in either competition had to join the Union, whose sole function was to organise the competitions. It was disbanded when Penarth won the Challenge Cup outright in 1890.[5]

However, it was soon realised there was a desperate need for an organisation which could supervise the burgeoning game at a local level, and support the growing status of the town club. Thus, in November 1892, a new Cardiff and District Football Union (C&DFU) was formed with much wider terms of reference than its predecessor and which embraced "all junior teams within a radius of nine miles of Cardiff", later extended to twelve miles.[6] This body has remained in existence ever since, now renamed the Cardiff and District Rugby Union. Its objectives were to: foster rugby; support the Cardiff club; settle disputes; and recognise club and individual merit.[7] A representative District XV was established which played occasional games with senior clubs like Cardiff, Neath, Bristol and Gloucester. In 1893-4, the Mallett Cup was introduced and was won by Cardiff Reserves, from an entry of fifteen teams. It is claimed that this is the oldest cup still competed for in Wales.[8] The following year saw a two division league established.[9] By 1896-7, founder members Barry had moved on to the increasingly competitive Glamorgan League.[10] At the end of the century, there were thirty-six local clubs taking part in three leagues and three knock out

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[3] *SWDN* 8 Sept. 1886 (CDFU); *SWDN* and *WM* 1886-89. Clubs which competed for the Challenge Cup (from 1886-7 to 1889-90) were: Canton Crusaders, Cardiff Crusaders, Cardiff Harlequins 1 and 2, Cardiff United, Cathays, Cogan, Ely Rovers, Grangetown, Llandaff, Penarth, Roath, Roath Rangers and Whitchurch.
[4] *SWDN* 17 Oct. 1889. Twelve teams entered the Junior Cup, competed for only once in 1889-90: Cardiff Rovers, Cathays Star, Cathays Rangers, Grangetown Juniors, Post Office, St.David's, Tredegarville, Wharton Wanderers, Whitchurch Juniors, and the 2nd XVs of Cogan, Ely Rangers and Penarth. .
[5] *Cardiff District Football Union Handbook 1886-87* (Cardiff, 1886), pp. 3-14; John Musselwhite, *The Butcher Boys of Donkey Island: An Historical Profile of Penarth R.F.C.* (Penarth, 1980), pp. 9, 20. See Appendix 5 for cup winners.
[6] *WM* 15 Nov. 1892. The first members included: Barry, Bowry Boys, Canton, Splott Crusaders, Splott Juniors, and Whitchurch.
[7] *WM* 4 Feb. 1897.
[8] *SWDN* 4 Jan. 1894. Participating clubs in the first Mallett Cup were: Barry, Blackweir, Canton, Cardiff Hornets, Cardiff Northern, Cardiff Reserves, Cardiff Star, Cathays, Garth, Grangetown, Grange Stars, Llandaff, Pentyrch, Splott Crusaders and Whitchurch.
[9] *SWDN* 10 Nov. 1894. Senior Competition: Barry, Canton, Grangetown, Cardiff Northern, Whitchurch. Junior Competition: Blackweir, Cathays United, Grange Star, Pentyrch, Roath, St. Mary's.
[10] *SWDN* 14 Aug. 1896.

cups.[11] However, Metcalfe has shown that, as late as 1913, half of the soccer teams in East Northumberland were not affiliated to the county FA nor involved in any leagues. This was very similar to Victorian Cardiff, where the majority of rugby teams never belonged to any union, nor played in any organised competitions.[12]

Before long, both Cardiff's First and Second teams contained many former District players. In 1897, the chairman commented that most of Cardiff's players came from "the ranks of her own junior clubs".[13] Some of these, like Jack Elliott (Llandaff), Gwyn Nicholls (Cardiff Star), Bert Winfield (St. Andrew's), Fred Cornish (Grangetown), Dai Fitzgerald (St. David's and Grangetown), Viv Huzzey (Canton), Tom Dobson (Blackweir and Llandaff Yard), Jerry Blake (Blackweir and Whitchurch), Billy O'Neill (St. Peter's) and Percy Bush (Romilly and St. Vincent's) became Welsh internationals.[14] The importance of the C&DFU to rugby in Wales was also evident in 1896, when the WFU suggested that it join the Union. This arose because the WFU had no jurisdiction over the transfer of the many District players who were joining WFU clubs, particularly those in the Glamorgan League. In September 1898, C&DFU became full members of the Union, the first organisation of its kind to do so. Shortly afterwards, the District reported Penygraig and Pontypridd for using members of C&DFU clubs without transfers. The WFU decided that transfers *were* required but, if refused by the District, clubs could then apply directly to them. Clearly, they were not prepared to delegate too much power to the "junior" union and accepting C&DFU into affiliation was a subtle way of bringing many clubs under the WFU's jurisdiction without massively extending membership. Restricting entry to the Union was one way in which the control of the game at the top level was retained in the hands of the professional and business middle classes, even though the majority of clubs catered for working men.[15]

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[11] *SWDN* 24, 28 Feb. 1900. See Appendix 5 for the local competitions held in 1899-1900.
[12] Alan Metcalfe, 'Football in the Mining Communities of East Northumberland 1882-1914', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 5, 3 (1988), p. 270.
[13] *SWDN* 3 May 1897.
[14] *WM* 4 Feb. 1897 (District players); *SWDN* 14 Nov. 1898 (O'Neill); John M. Jenkins, Duncan Pierce and Timothy Auty, *Who's Who of Welsh International Rugby Players* (Wrexham, 1991); *Evening Express* 6 Apr. 1901 (Bush).
[15] WFU minutes 30 Dec. 1896, 21 Sept. 7 Nov. 1898.

Despite the immediate success of the C&DFU, local clubs still rose and fell with regularity. With little or no gate money, most suffered from financial insecurity. The movement of key officials and players, as well as the loss of pitches, also contributed to what Melcalfe terms the "chronic instability" of clubs and the "constantly shifting configuration" of the game at the time.[16] Leading clubs were as vulnerable as less successful teams. St. David's, for instance, who had fixtures with Bridgend, Bristol and Pontypridd went out of existence when many of their players joined Cardiff.[17] As soon as the Northern Union (NU) was established in 1895, District clubs immediately began to lose players, a surprisingly large number of whom became professional during the late 1890s.[18] In 1899, it was reported that District clubs were affected "acutely" by the number of players "going North".[19] Even some amateur English clubs attempted to poach players. Torquay Athletic, for instance, were suspended by the RFU for offering terms to St. Peter's players.[20] The increasingly ambitious valley clubs, especially those in the Glamorgan League, also enticed players. Undoubtedly, financial inducements or offers of employment were often involved. It is a widely held view in Wales that the Cardiff club's strength has traditionally depended on players from the valleys. Yet, in the 1880s and 1890s, there is no *great* evidence for this. On the other hand, many of the leading valley clubs relied, to some extent, on players from Cardiff: for example, future internationals Tom Dobson and Percy Bush captained Llwynypia and Penygraig respectively. In 1899, there were calls to investigate the amateur status of thirty Cardiff men who were playing for "Rhondda" clubs in the Glamorgan League.[21] Neighbourhood clubs in Cardiff, on the other hand, with no gates and little income, and with many local competitors making claims on players, could rarely sustain the playing standard of the best valley clubs, who enjoyed clearly demarked boundaries of community support and substantially greater revenues.

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[16] Metcalfe, 'Football in East Northumberland', pp. 274, 278-9.
[17] *WM* 8 Oct. 1894 (St. David's).
[18] For example, *SWDN* 8 Oct. 1895.Grangetown lost two players only a month after the NU was founded.
[19] *SWDN* 18 Sept. 1899.
[20] WFU minutes 8 Dec. 1898 (Torquay).
[21] *SWDN* 28 Apr. 1899.

The organisation of leagues and cups helped to create a more rational structure to the season, though the participants in the competitions varied considerably with the rise and fall of clubs. A highly efficient postal service meant that fixtures could be arranged easily and swiftly. Local newspapers helped by publishing details of clubs with free Saturdays. Annual football handbooks provided another means for advertising open dates, as well as for confirming previously made arrangements. They also reveal that most established clubs had arranged a more or less complete fixture list by the opening of the season. For C&DFU competitions, it was customary for secretaries to arrange mutually acceptable dates. This was the general practice in other competitions, such as the Glamorgan and Monmouthshire Leagues and it sometimes led to confusion and dispute.

A necessary condition for the expansion of the game in Cardiff was sufficient space in which to play. Croll has shown in Merthyr, and Meller in Bristol, how the lack of available land might restrict the development of sports.[22] In this respect, Cardiff was fortunate. Four main types of playing field were used: land occupied by a single club on a permanent or semi-permanent basis; land within the built-up area waiting for development; edge of town land; and public parks. But every conceivable piece of ground was used. There are several reports of matches, presumably between juniors, even taking place on the open space within Adamsdown Square and Loudoun Square. The more established clubs like Cardiff, Cardiff Harlequins and Penarth were able to lease and enclose their grounds and charge for entrance. The majority, however, would have occupied under licence, with the possibility of eviction at short notice. The loss of playing fields was a constant threat to many clubs and no doubt contributed to the high turnover. No independent clubs at this time owned the freehold of their ground: indeed, only three city clubs do so today.[23]

From the very beginning of the game, the central location and convenience of the Arms Park guaranteed it would be the main focus of any sporting activity. It was here that Glamorgan and Cardiff Wanderers played in the early 1870s. However, following a

[22] Andrew J. Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture, Public Space and Urban Meaning, Merthyr c1870-1914* (PhD thesis, University of Wales Cardiff, 1997), pp. 208, 224-6; 142-3; H.E. Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914* (London, 1976), p. 236.

disagreement with the Marquis of Bute, the newly formed Cardiff played their first three seasons at Sophia Gardens, though the club's official histories do not refer to this.[24] Hence it was Sophia Gardens which hosted the 1878-9 final of the Welsh Challenge Cup against Newport. Even after moving, Cardiff continued to use the Gardens when playing conditions at the Park were bad. However, since 1879, the club has enjoyed permanent and exclusive use of the Arms Park. The ground was shared with the cricket club, though, as the rugby club's use and development of the site grew, there were increasing conflicts between the two.[25] The significance of the strategic location of the Arms Park to Cardiff rugby was recognised at the time. In 1896, "Ariel" declared:

> the dear old park ... just as muddy and clammy, but just as convenient and get-at-able for everybody as it was when Cardiff was merely aping a large town. The value of this piece of ground to the Cardiff Football Club is really untold, and they will never rightly value it till they have to shift![26]

Most local match reports, especially in early years, give little indication of the exact location of many of the grounds used. There are occasional glimpses of games played in Roath, Cathays or Canton on sites subsequently taken for housing. For instance, Windsor, a strong early club, used land now occupied by Senghenydd Road in Cathays. Ambitious clubs like Cardiff Harlequins sought their own enclosed facilities and occupied various grounds at Penarth Road, North Road and Newport Road.[27] The major landowners in Cardiff generally gave their support to the game, provided it did not conflict with their wider estate management interests. When Penarth's new ground was opened in 1891, it was provided free of charge by Lord Windsor, whose agent referred to the similar generosity of the Marquis of Bute and Lord Tredegar who were "doing all they can to encourage the game of football". The Arms Park, of course, was Bute land, whilst the Harlequins' Newport Road ground was owned by the Tredegar Estate.[28]

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[23] These are: Cardiff, Glamorgan Wanderers and Cardiff High School Old Boys.
[24] C.S. Arthur, *The Cardiff Rugby Football Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1906* (Cardiff, 1908); D.E. Davies, *Cardiff Rugby Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1975: "The Greatest"* (Cardiff, 1975).
[25] For example, *WM* 11 Apr. 1887.
[26] *WM* 27 Jan. 1896.
[27] *SWDN* 10 Oct. 1892.
[28] *WM* 5 Oct. 1891.

Clubs on the urban fringe managed to find playing fields more easily than those in the urban core. East Moors was a popular venue for Splott and Newtown teams, whilst in the west, Canton and Ely Commons were also used. Teams in outlying villages, like Llandaff and Whitchurch, with little competition from other clubs or developers, were able to use their grounds exclusively and permanently. The opportunity to take a twelve year lease allowed Whitchurch to erect a stand and enclose their ground and this enabled them to apply successfully for membership of the WFU. [29]

Most clubs, however, used public playing fields. Easily the most important of these was Sophia Gardens. Centrally located, close to public houses and transport terminals, it became the home of many rugby clubs, including junior and school teams, from all over the town.[30] The Gardens were opened to the public by the Marquis of Bute in 1858 and shortly afterwards, they were extended to include "Sophia Gardens Field", the site today of the Glamorgan county cricket ground. It was here that "by the turn of the century, cricket, football, athletics and cycling was staged".[31] Its contribution to rugby was immense. Not only did it play host to Cardiff for three seasons and to the Challenge Cup final, more importantly, it was the place where an overwhelming number of Cardiff's Victorian citizens learned and developed their game. Without this large and accessible facility, it is questionable whether rugby would have expanded quite as it did. Contemporary reports show that, on many Saturdays, in the late 1880s and early 1890s, hundreds played there throughout the day.

Sophia Gardens, however, was not the only public space available. Throughout much of our period, clubs in Cathays played at the recreation ground, which was part of a site acquired by the Corporation for a burial ground. However, as the cemetery grew, the area available for rugby was gradually reduced. Eventually, in 1892, the Burial Board decided to stop the

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[29] *WM* 17 Sept. 1894.
[30] R.H. Morgan, 'The Development of an Urban Transport System: The Case of Cardiff', *Welsh History Review*, 13, 2 (1986), pp. 178-181.
[31] A.K. Hignell, 'Brief History of Sophia Gardens, Cardiff' (2003), [www] <URL: www.cricketarchive.co.uk/Archive/Articles/0/851.html> [Accessed 16 Feb. 2006].

football because the "unseemly conduct" of spectators caused "great annoyance" to those attending funerals. [32]

Nevertheless, clubs were able to use other facilities in the area, such as Maindy Barracks, a particular favourite of railway clubs, like Taff Vale Wanderers; and the new recreation ground at Roath Park. An indication of the variety of grounds used is given in the *SWDN* during November 1890 which recorded matches at Sophia Gardens, Maindy Barracks, Cathays Recreation Ground, Roath Park, Llandaff Fields; and on pitches now lost to us in Market Gardens Field (Canton), Atlas Ground (Canton), Canton Common, Saltmede (Grangetown), East Moors (Splott), Tynycoed Field (Roath), and Leckwith Common. On one Saturday in 1889, the *SWDN* reported forty-two matches involving local clubs.[33]

We do not know whether clubs had fixed pitches at public parks. Given the number of teams playing at the Gardens, it seems unlikely, though one match report does refer to Mackintosh playing "on the patch of the Ely Rovers in Sophia Gardens." The marking of pitches was probably the responsibility of the home club. There are occasional references to this not having been carried out, such as when Penygraig complained that Llandaff had failed to mark out touch-lines and goal-lines. The absence of barriers frequently resulted in spectators encroaching onto the field. Commenting favourably on the arrangements at Penarth's ground, "Old Stager" wrote in 1886 that he had expected to see supporters interfering with the players: "the sort of thing ... to be witnessed any Saturday at that happy hunting ground of Cardiff district clubs, the Sophia Gardens." What the arrangements were for erecting goal posts can only be guessed at. Whether they were kept in situ or erected each week is unknown. It is likely, of course, that posts were much smaller and lighter than today and so it would have possible to carry them from the corner of the field or from the local pub and erect them for each match. If every spare part of Sophia Gardens was used, as it almost certainly must have been, then something like this must have happened. Timber cross bars were not always standard in the early years of the game, when tape was used.

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[32] *SWDN* 5 Oct. 1892; *County Borough of Cardiff Reports of Council and Committees*, Nov. 1891 to Nov. 1892, p. 589.
[33] *SWDN* 25 Nov. 1889.

Sometimes, though, they were dispensed with altogether. When St. David's defeated Bridgend in 1892 at the Barracks, there were no cross bars and therefore no goal attempts.[34]

There were few on-field facilities for the players. Press correspondence throws light on conditions prevailing at Sophia Gardens in 1885.

> [There is a] lack of a proper place ... for the players' clothes, bags etc. The dressing-rooms pertaining to public-houses in the neighbourhood of the Sophia Gardens Field are quite inadequate for the number of our local clubs which play ... there every Saturday and Wednesday ... players [have to] deposit their clothes in a wash-house ... which might accommodate four persons at the most, and on the open field ... pilfering goes on at an alarming rate. A few weeks ago the members of one club alone lost ... over £2 ... Such trifling articles as a spare football, hats, mufflers ... disappear with annoying frequency. One player recently had his bag and contents "lifted" ... owing to the nuisance of either having to come to the field dressed and go back dirty, or to dress on the field and have your things stolen, many men will not "turn up". What is wanted is a good large erection in the Sophia Gardens field ... with conveniences for washing ... This would be an incalculable boon to the football community.[35]

Another complained that "street arabs" had recently begun regular pilfering from players. He suggested a Cardiff v District match to raise funds for a building, with a trough for washing. It is not known whether the authorities responded to these complaints. Some years later, there were calls for the attendance of police at matches to deal with the "roughs" who robbed players' clothes and even stole their footballs. Even much later, there was little accommodation at Sophia Gardens. Bleddyn Williams (Cardiff and Wales) recalled playing there for Cardiff Schoolboys around 1934, when the players stripped under the trees and washed in the river.[36]

There were occasions when Sophia Gardens was unavailable. Nevertheless, even when Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show took over the ground in 1891, "Some of the Junior teams

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[34] *SWDN* 25 Nov. 1889 (Ely), 30 Dec. 1889 (Llandaff), 20 Sept. 1886 (Penarth), 31 Oct. 1892 (St. David's).
[35] *SWDN* 10 Feb. 1885.
[36] *SWDN* 14 Feb. 1885 (building); *WM* 12 Oct. 1894 (police); Gareth Edwards and Don Llewellyn, 'The Williams Family: More Than a "Rugby Dynasty" ', *Garth Domain,* 26, (2004), p. 11.

... took advantage of the stretches of unoccupied land and had "a kick or two" on them." When players turned up in 1895, their matches had to be abandoned because "the Band of Hope demonstration ... occupied the field." No doubt many happily retaliated by returning to their pub to celebrate a free afternoon.[37]

Though a few public houses ran their own teams, they were of far greater importance to the game as social meeting places and headquarters. Because of this, it soon became apparent to the sport's critics that rugby would have little "reforming" influence on the working class.[38] As Collins and Vamplew astutely put it, "Rather than football being an adjunct of the pub, the pub almost became an adjunct of football." They note that breweries recognised that a location near a major football ground was an important asset which increased takings.[39] This must have been true in Cardiff. With their close proximity to both Cardiff Arms Park and Sophia Gardens, town centre pubs, hotels and restaurants were well placed to respond in a variety of ways to the needs of the increasing numbers of players and supporters.

Glimpses of the relationship between rugby and the pub are found in advertisements in local football handbooks published in the 1890s. For example, in 1891, the *Cardiff Cottage*, still a popular meeting place for Cardiff supporters, was offering a telegraphic results service. Another modern favourite, the *Blue Bell* (now the *Goat Major*) promoted itself as being one minute from both the Arms Park and, more optimistically, Sophia Gardens. It boasted first class accommodation for visiting teams and was also the meeting place for C&DFU. "The Home of Athletes" was the claim of the *New Market Tavern* (renamed *O'Neill's*), being one minute from the Arms Park and five from the Gardens. It was the headquarters of St. David's in 1891-2 and it provided players with free hot and cold baths. It was here that C&DFU was founded. The *Three Horse Shoes* in High Street

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[37] *Welsh Athlete* 21 Sept. 1891; *SWDN* 30 Sept. 1895.
[38] Gareth Morgan, 'Rugby and Revivalism: Sport and Religion in Edwardian Wales', *IJHS*, 22, 3 (2005), p. 435.
[39] Tony Collins and Wray Vamplew, *Mud, Sweat and Beers: A Cultural History of Sport and Alcohol* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 13-15; Alan Metcalfe, 'The Control of Space and the Development of Sport: A Case Study of Twenty Two Sports in the Mining Communities of East Northumberland, 1800-1914', *Sports Historian*, 15, (1995), p. 27.

accommodated four clubs and offered telegraphic results. The strategic location in Westgate Street of the fifty bedroom *Grand Hotel*, overlooking the Arms Park, gave it particular advantages. It advertised facilities for football dinners, concerts and meetings; plunge and swimming baths; and special accommodation for touring teams.[40] Its unique attraction, however, was an early example of the hospitality suite: season tickets could be purchased to view matches from the hotel balconies. This was an innovative and enterprising society, after all. In 1894, the customers of "the favourite resort of football enthusiasts", the *Philharmonic Restaurant*, could receive football results every Saturday. In the same year, the publishers Mortimer & Co. offered free advertising to all licensed houses which used their telegraphic results service.[41]

The 1890-91 handbook provides further insights into the interdependence of pubs and Welsh rugby. It contains the fixture lists of twenty-six Cardiff and district clubs, nineteen of which indicated the whereabouts of their "dressing rooms". Seventeen of these were located in pubs or hotels, one in a coffee tavern and one in a church institute. This is similar to Collins' findings for Yorkshire in 1885-6, where only five out of eighty rugby clubs did not use a pub as headquarters.[42]

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[40] This could be a risk for hoteliers. The London Harlequins caused so much damage at the *Angel Hotel* in 1886 that Cardiff broke off fixtures for several seasons. *SWDN* 1 Feb., 26 Apr. 1886.

[41] *The Welsh Athlete and West of England Cycling News Football Handbook 1891-2* (Cardiff, 1891), pp. [61] (Cottage), [56] (Blue Bell), [54] (New Market), [42] (Three Horse Shoes), [52] (Grand); *Mortimer's Football Guide for South Wales and Monmouthshire: Season, 1894-95* (Barry, 1894), pp. 22 (Philharmonic), 49 (results service).

[42] *Cardiff and South Wales Footballer's Companion: 1890-91* (Cardiff, 1890), pp.15-66; Tony Collins, *Rugby's Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (London, 1998), p. 33.

Table 4: Cardiff and District Clubs' Dressing Rooms 1890-1[43]

Club	Dressing Room	Playing Field
Canton	*Rover Hotel*, Wellington Street	Sophia Gardens
Cardiff	*Angel Hotel,* Castle Street	Cardiff Arms Park
Cardiff Cyclists	*Maindy Hotel,* North Road, Maindy	Barracks
Cardiff Harlequins	*Washington Hotel*, GWR Station, Canal Wharf West/Penarth Road	Penarth Road
Cardiff Juniors (16)	*Coldstream Hotel*, Brook St., Riverside	
Cardiff Rangers	*Cattle Market Tavern*, Quay Street	Sophia Gardens
Cardiff Rovers	*Bristol and South Wales Hotel*, Penarth Road	Penarth Road
Cardiff Star	*Coldstream Hotel*, Riverside	Sophia Gardens
Cardiff United	*Grand Hotel Vaults*, Womanby St.	Sophia Gardens
Cathays Rangers	*Maindy Hotel,* North Road, Maindy	Barracks
Cathays Star	*St. Andrew's Institute*, George St.	Cathays Recn. Ground
Clyde Rovers (15)	*Lord Wimborne Hotel*, Portmanmoor Rd., Splott	East Moors
Cogan	*Cogan Hotel,* Hewell St., Cogan	
Ely Rovers	*Half-Way Hotel*, Penhill Road	Sophia Gardens
Llandaff	*Malsters Arms,* Llandaff Road	Mill Field
St. David's	*Three Horse Shoes*, High Street	Sophia Gardens
St. Peter's	*Flora Hotel*, Cathays Terrace	Barracks
Star Juniors	*Anchor Coffee Tavern*, Custom House Street	
Taff Vale Wanderers	*Woodville Hotel*, Woodville Road, Cathays	Barracks

Several authors have referred to clubs playing on land attached to public houses.[44] There is no evidence for this in the built-up areas of Cardiff but it was probably different in the less densely populated districts. For example, in the village of Whitchurch, the local club played on fields adjoining the *Hollybush* and the *Fox and Hounds*, their headquarters for many years.

[43] Compiled from *Cardiff and South Wales Footballer's Companion: 1890-91* (Cardiff, 1890), pp. 15-66.

The north of England practice of well-known footballers running pubs, noted by Mason and by Collins and Vamplew, does not appear to have been very common in Cardiff at the time. One exception was Sid Nicholls (Cardiff and Wales) who took over the *Grand Hotel* in 1894-5 with his brother Gwyn as under-manager. Sid Nicholls had finished playing by then, but when Viv Huzzey became the licensee of the *Windsor Arms* in 1899, he was still a Cardiff and Wales player. This arrangement was probably an unsuccessful attempt to keep him in Wales, for a year later he joined Oldham in the NU.[45]

Barlow observed that coffee taverns were popular with some Rochdale rugby clubs. They were also used in Cardiff but not to any significant extent. Those clubs which did frequent them were not *necessarily* abstainers. There are references in the press to clubs using coffee taverns on some occasions and pubs at other times. It was perhaps just a matter of convenience. For those who adopted neither public house nor coffee tavern, there is a useful reference to the facilities used by the Riverside soccer club in the history of Cardiff City. Their clubhouse was a disused stable at the rear of a house, where members could play billiards and cards. As it was a short walk from Sophia Gardens, the team presumably also changed here.[46]

Players and Administrators

Having explored aspects of how the game in Cardiff was organised, it would be appropriate here to consider who played and administered the game. It is widely accepted that the overwhelming majority of the first rugby players came from the middle and upper classes.

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[44] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* (Brighton, 1981), p. 27; Collins and Vamplew, *Mud, Sweat and Beers*, pp. 11-22; Metcalfe, 'Control of Space', p. 24.
[45] Mason, *Association Football and English Society*, pp. 118-119; Collins and Vamplew, *Mud, Sweat and Beers*, p. 13; David Parry-Jones, *Prince Gwyn: Gwyn Nicholls and the First Golden Era of Welsh Rugby* (Bridgend, 1999), p. 32.
[46] Stuart Barlow, 'The Diffusion of 'Rugby' Football in the Industrialized Context of Rochdale, 1868-1890: A Conflict of Ethical Values' *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 10, 1 (1993), p. 62; Grahame Lloyd, *C'Mon City! A Hundred Years of the Bluebirds* (Bridgend, 1999), pp. 21-2.

As Gareth Williams has written, "The role of the middle class in establishing rugby clubs in Wales is clear".[47]

Cardiff provides an opportunity to test this with a limited empirical study of the social background of the town's early players during the 1870s. Arthur's 1908 history records the names of many and includes a list of members for Cardiff's first two seasons.[48] Additional names were obtained from press match reports. Thus the names of 150 men involved in rugby up to 1878 were identified. Census returns, directories, biographies and internet search engines were then consulted to try to identify individuals. In many cases, this proved impossible, not least because of the large number of players with common Welsh surnames. Frequently, only a surname was available, making a positive identification difficult. Nevertheless, information was traced on fifty-four, over a third of the known members and players associated with Cardiff and its predecessors up to 1878. This is a sufficiently large sample to provide a reliable indication of the typical background of Cardiff's first players. Whilst this exercise largely confirms traditional views about the social class of early rugby players in Wales, it is the first detailed empirical study of a club's playing membership from this period.[49]

Those identified included all the leading players and officials. None was working-class, whether judged by occupation, father's occupation, residence or education. The majority had occupations connected with the coal trade rather than the professions. Some were businessmen in their own right, including a newspaper proprietor, timber merchant, ship-owner and chain manufacturer. Many were employed in family commercial enterprises such as shipping, timber importing, coal exporting and fuel manufacture. There were mining engineers, colliery agents, land agents, draughtsmen, teachers, an assistant dentist and students. Finally, there was a large group of clerks employed by shipbrokers, solicitors, banks and the post office as well as by coal, railway and insurance companies. Towards the end of the decade, there are indications of an increase in the number of lower status clerks,

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[47] Gareth Williams, 'Community, Class and Rugby', p. 10.
[48] Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby*, pp. 7-21.
[49] See Appendix 4 for details of identified individuals.

suggesting perhaps the beginning of the downward shift in the social class of membership. Of course, it is possible that, amongst the unknown two-thirds, there were some working-class players, since they are generally less likely to have left some record of their lives. However, the overwhelming evidence is that in the 1870s Cardiff was predominantly, if not entirely, a middle-class club.

There is also some contemporary evidence which supports this view of a narrow social base. In 1878, the captain wrote to the press about his fellow players, "being most of them engaged in business, [they] are unable to absent themselves from the office more than one afternoon a week." Another correspondent suggested that all members could be guaranteed games if internal matches were organised, involving Lloyd's v Coal Trade and Business in Docks v The Rest amongst others, confirming that players were predominantly office workers. [50]

In March 1879, Cardiff met the holders Newport in the final of the Challenge Cup. Attempting to excuse Cardiff's defeat, the *SWDN* declared, "while the members of [Cardiff] are *many of them connected with the offices of commercial and railway companies*, many of the members of the Newport club are artisans and the difference in point of strength was considerable." [51]

This appears to confirm that the club was still largely socially exclusive at the end of the decade, though the *SWDN* was wrong about the democratic nature of the Newport club at this time, as shown earlier. However, the match report also referred to the many thousands of spectators and to the keen interest which they displayed. Such levels of support would soon entice clubs to overcome any initial reluctance about selecting working men. It was inevitable that, amongst the growing numbers drawn to these exiting contests, there would have been workers who wanted to give the game a try. Certainly, within two years of the 1879 cup final, working men were appearing in the Cardiff First XV.

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[50] *WM* 29 Nov. 1878 (captain), 2 Dec. 1878 (Lloyd's).

Further evidence of the essentially middle-class nature of the game in the 1870s is revealed by the 10th Glamorgan Rifle Volunteers (GRV) club. There were also two other volunteer units in Cardiff at the time, the 16th GRV and the 3rd Glamorgan Artillery Volunteers (GAV). According to a local historian writing in 1918, when these were formed, the 16th GRV were known as the "People's Rifle Corps" and had "more moderate and less restrictive terms of entry than the 10th ". He added that the 3rd GAV comprised "artisans, shipwrights and other stalwart working men". It is revealing, therefore, that of these three units, it was only the more socially elite 10th GRV which had a rugby club during the 1870s.[52]

This research into players' backgrounds also provides clues about the process of the early growth of rugby in the town. Schoolmasters may have been instrumental in introducing the game. Then there were the local products of rugby playing public schools: in Cardiff these included Cheltenham, Marlborough, Clifton, Sherborne, Rugby, Christ College Brecon and Monmouth. In addition, old boys of private schools like Monkton House, Cardiff Collegiate and Bridgend, as well as local grammar schools like Cowbridge were crucially important. Whilst students are often credited with spreading the game, apart from a few who may have played at university or teaching hospital, their influence in Cardiff does not appear to have been strong. The game, however, *was* enhanced by the presence of talented newcomers, like William Graves, who was already an established player with Manchester and who played for the North of England. The influence of one or two gifted individuals like this cannot be over estimated. [53]

However, by the early 1880s, Cardiff could no longer depend on its own resources to maintain its growing status in rugby. The initial function of merely providing enjoyment for members was giving way to the need to uphold the town's reputation.[54] In so doing, the

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[51] *SWDN* 10 Mar. 1879 italics added.
[52] W.J. Trounce, *"Cardiff in the Fifties": The Reminiscences and Historical Notes of Alderman W.J. Trounce J.P. 1850-1860* (Cardiff, 1918), pp. 88-9.
[53] See Appendix 4 for details.
[54] Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*, pp. 11, 17.

club increasingly began to rely on players produced by local "junior" clubs, such as Bute Dock Rangers, Canton, Cardiff Quins, Cardiff Rangers and Windsor. Both working and middle-class players joined Cardiff from most of these clubs who must, therefore, have drawn their players from across the social classes. Working men were, therefore, probably playing in such clubs by the end of the 1870s, if they were capable of representing Cardiff by 1881. The arrival of the working class, not only in Cardiff but throughout Welsh rugby, came at a time when clear signs of political change in Wales were also emerging. With nine gains in the general election of 1880, Liberal MPs now held twenty-nine of the thirty-three Welsh seats.[55] The movement towards a more democratic Wales in both politics and rugby was underway.

Given the major impact they subsequently had on the wider game, it is interesting to note the number of former local club players who represented Cardiff in Hancock's year. At the end of 1885-6, the *SWDN* published a list of the men who played under Hancock. [56] By searching the press in earlier seasons, it is possible to show that of the seventeen who appeared most frequently, *at least* eleven had played for local clubs before joining Cardiff. Seven of the eleven went on to win Welsh caps. Former Canton players included: Billy Douglas, Albert Hybart, Dick Kedzlie, David Lewis, Buller Stadden (all Welsh internationals), Arthur Emery, John Sant and Wyndham Jarman; while Hugh Hughes and George Young (both Welsh internationals) had played for Cardiff Harlequins and Jimmy Mahoney for Cardiff Rangers. Details of the seventeen players are shown in the following Table 5.

[55] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford, 1982 edn.), pp. 12-13.
[56] *SWDN* 21 Apr. 1886.

Table 5: Cardiff First XV Players 1885-6 [57]

Name	No. of games	Occupation	Former club(s)	Place of birth	Honours
Hugh Hughes	27	Carpenter	Star, Cardiff Quins	Meirionydd	Wales
Wyndham Jarman	27	Decorator	Canton	Cardiff	
Alexander Bland	27	Solicitor		Pembs	Wales
William Buller Stadden	26	Labourer	Canton, Bute Dock Rangers	Cardiff	Wales
Quinton Dick Kedzlie	26	Blacksmith	Windsor, Canton	Scotland	Wales
Frank Hancock	26	Brewery Director	Wiveliscombe, Somerset	Somerset	Wales
Arthur Emery	25	Merchant's Clerk	Canton	Cardiff	
James Mahoney	24	Labourer	Cardiff Rangers, Canton, Bute Dock Rangers	Cardiff	
William Douglas	23	Colliery Official	Windsor, Canton	Barry	Wales
Charles Arthur	22	Schoolmaster Estate Agent	Newton College (Devon), Winchester, Dorchester, Cheltenham	Norfolk	Wales
Angus Stuart	22	Labourer?		Scotland	GB & NZ
David Lewis	22	Clerk	Canton, Cardiff Quins	Cardiff	Wales
Henry Simpson	22	Chartering Clerk	Cardiff Volunteers	Durham	Wales
John Sant	13	Architect	Canton	Cardiff	
Frank Hill	12	Solicitor	Monkton House, Clifton College	Cardiff	Wales
George Young	11	Shipowner's son	Monkton House, Cardiff Quins	Tyneside	Wales
Albert Hybart	10	Timber exporter	Cardiff Collegiate, Canton, Cardiff Quins	Cardiff	Wales

[57] Compiled from *SWDN*, *WM*, directories, census returns and biographies.

Croll argues that the changes in the social profile of Welsh clubs in the 1880s had a dramatic impact on the first generation of middle-class players, some of whom, he says, "were (literally) kicked off the field of play". He uses Cardiff in 1884-5 as an example of this process, drawing on reminiscences of "Old Stager" for his evidence.

> The game, by that time, had fairly caught on, and became the pursuit of the masses, who in earlier days had been content merely to look on from outside the ropes. Clubs were springing up all over the town, composed mainly of lusty youths many of them working lads or sons of working men, sound of wind and limb, and brimful of pluck and ambition ... [the Cardiff second XV was] recruited almost entirely from one of those minor clubs ... Canton ... [and they] ... upset in a pitched encounter the first fifteen. The result was the precipitate retirement of many of the older members.[58]

There *were* several ex-Canton players in Hancock's team, but they were by no means all working-class. Using census returns, biographies and press articles, it is possible to establish the social background of Hancock's side.[59] Examination of Cardiff teams in match reports reveal that the process of working-class participation began *earlier* and was more *gradual* and less dramatic than suggested in the recollections of "Old Stager". Of the six men who were working-class, Dick Kedzlie (blacksmith) played as early as 1881-2 and Jimmy Mahoney (labourer), Wyndham Jarman (decorator) and Buller Stadden (labourer) first appeared in 1882-3. Angus Stuart first played in 1883-4 and Hugh Hughes (carpenter) early in 1884-5.[60] There is no doubt, therefore, that during the 1880s, the composition of the Cardiff XV became more socially mixed than the largely exclusive teams of the 1870s. Moreover, the inclusion of Mahoney, a member of Cardiff's Irish Catholic community, is perhaps the best evidence of all that ability was becoming more important than social standing. Stadden, incidentally, became the first genuinely working man to play for Wales in 1884. However, given that the majority of Hancock's 1885-6 team were middle-class

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[58] Croll, *Civilizing the Urban*, pp. 245-6; *Cardiff Times* 10 Sept. 1892.
[59] Anon, *Contemporary Portraits: Men and Women of South Wales and Monmouthshire: Cardiff Section* (Cardiff, 1896), pp. 34-5; Jenkins, Pierce and Auty, *Who's Who of Welsh International Rugby,* passim.
[60] Wing three-quarter Angus Stuart's social background has been difficult to confirm. He was a professional sprinter and joined Dewsbury with Stadden in 1886. Both were employed as mill hands there, suggesting he was working-class. *SWDN* 3 Oct. 1886. Remarkably, Stuart later played at *forward* for Great Britain (1888) *and* New Zealand (1893). R.H. Chester and N.A.C. McMillan, *The Visitors: The History of International Rugby Teams in New Zealand* (Auckland, 1990), p. 41.

(eleven out of the seventeen), it is an exaggeration to argue, as Croll does, that the sudden presence of *some* working-class players "spelt the end for their social superiors."[61] Their participation was important, perhaps crucial and it is noteworthy that of the eight men who appeared most frequently in the First XV in that record breaking season, five were working-class. However, their involvement was neither sudden nor total.

Nevertheless, a strong case can be made for the argument that Cardiff was only able to enjoy and maintain its dominant position in British rugby from the 1880s onwards because it sat at the apex of a large pyramid of local clubs from which it was constantly able to renew its teams. During Hancock's year, Swansea decided to institute a cup competition to stimulate clubs in their area, because it was "generally thought that the unbroken success achieved by the Cardiff first and second fifteens is due in measure to the large number of clubs they can draw from".[62] The frequently asserted and, it is contested, somewhat distorted view that Welsh rugby equals valleys rugby ignores the important contribution which these almost entirely forgotten Cardiff clubs made to the game. From the very earliest days, local Cardiff clubs were producing players who would help to change not only the social character of Welsh rugby but also the way in which the Welsh, and later the rest of the world, would play rugby.

However, importantly, the participation of working men in the Cardiff club did not extend to its management. Arthur's history records the committee members for each season up to 1906 and it is clear that the control of the club was retained firmly by the middle class throughout. For 1899-1900, the final season in the study period, eighteen officers are listed. They were all former players but, of the sixteen who can be identified, only one was working-class and he was the vice-captain. Two of the Second XV committee were lower middle-class. The remainder were all solicitors, other professionals or businessmen of substance. It was this class which also dominated the WFU and other senior clubs at the time. [63]

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[61] Croll, *Civilizing the Urban*, p. 246.
[62] *SWDN* 1 Feb. 1886.
[63] Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby*, passim. For the 1899-1900 officers see p. 147.

There were some clubs which, from time to time, attempted to challenge Cardiff's dominance as the "premier" club, notably Cardiff Harlequins and Penarth.[64] It is evidence of the remarkable strength of Cardiff rugby that, for several seasons, these clubs were regarded as being amongst the senior clubs of Wales. But they were never able to break the powerful grip which the Cardiff club had on the Cardiff public: it was the "town" team and therefore the focus of enormous civic pride and, as such, it represented the town in a way in which no other team could hope to challenge. As the regional capital of a large hinterland, too, it drew its support from a much wider area than just the borough. When the "premier" team was playing away, neither the Quins nor Penarth could ever attract crowds like Cardiff, even if the opposition were Swansea, Newport or Llanelli.

Cardiff Harlequins was a socially mixed club, which emerged from the obscurity of district rugby in the late 1870s via a series of name changes and mergers. By 1890 the Quins were recognised as one of the eight leading Welsh clubs, as were Penarth.[65] Under their energetic secretary, A.J. Davies,[66] the Quins were able to record victories over every leading Welsh club (except Cardiff, who would rarely give them fixtures), as well as over many English sides like Bath, Bristol, Leicester and Northampton. They produced two Welsh internationals in Percy Bennett and Fred Nicholls as well as several Welsh trialists and county players. Despite these successes, however, they found it difficult to retain many of their more promising players like Sid Nicholls, W.E.O. Williams, Hugh Hughes, Hugh Ingledew, Norman Biggs and Gwyn Nicholls, all of whom joined Cardiff and were later capped by Wales. The Quins took over and developed a new ground in Roath in 1892, but they overstretched themselves financially. The crowds were never large enough to sustain

[64] Musselwhite, *Penarth R.F.C.* , pp. 7-39.
[65] *WM* 12 Apr. 1890. The other senior clubs were Neath, Newport, Llanelli, Penygraig and Swansea.
[66] *SWDN* 21 Sept. 1896. A.J. Davies served on the WFU and IRB and was a candidate for the post of WFU secretary in 1896. Davies served on the East District Committee for many years. Secretary of Cardiff District FU 1886-1890, he was also mainly responsible for establishing the Glamorgan County FC, of which he was its first secretary. A prominent referee, he was also active in Welsh athletics. He was widely regarded as being hostile to the Cardiff club.

this venture and following a major row with Cardiff over the transfer of a player, the rugby club virtually folded in 1895, later returning only as a local team.[67]

Formed in 1880, Penarth were perhaps the most socially inclusive of all Welsh clubs of the period. Players in the earliest teams came from the across the very wide range of social classes found in the town. Engine fitters, boatmen, carpenters, railwaymen, boilermakers, coal trimmers and labourers, as well as clerks, insurance agents, shop assistants and shopkeepers could be found playing alongside the public school educated sons of wealthy ship and coal magnates. The Penarth club provides strong evidence that, by the early 1880s, Welsh rugby was becoming socially democratic. Like Cardiff, however, the management of the club was controlled largely by the middle class, though there were perhaps fewer professionals and more small businessmen involved. Writing to the *SWDN* in 1890-1 to refute arguments for a merger with Cardiff, the club secretary claimed that many of the town's leading residents were members: "we have a couple of hundred members ... including many of the aristocracy of Penarth".[68]

Under the influence of stone mason Dickie Garrett and boilermaker George Rowles, both of whom captained the club and were capped by Wales, Penarth enjoyed a dramatic rise to prominence. By the 1890s, the club had recorded victories over all the leading Welsh clubs, except Swansea, as well as over London Welsh, Bath, Bristol, Devonport Albion, Gloucester, Leicester, Moseley, St. Helens (Lancashire) and Wakefield Trinity. However, as with Cardiff Quins, the club found it difficult to keep players from moving to their more powerful neighbours in Cardiff. By the end of the century, Penarth were struggling to maintain their previous high standard, but unlike the Quins, they managed to survive, mainly due to their being a town team capable of relying on strong support from the local community.[69]

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[67] *SWDN* 10 Oct. 1892.
[68] 1881 and 1891 Census; Penarth RFC; *SWDN* 22 Nov. 1890.
[69] Musselwhite, *Penarth R.F.C.*, pp. 7-39.

Apart from these senior clubs, it is virtually impossible to determine the social background of the administrators and players belonging to the majority of Cardiff's teams, as no membership records survive. Team lists in the press are of limited use, since without addresses it is difficult to identify individuals with any certainty, especially given the size of Cardiff and the prevalence of common Welsh surnames. However, a limited exercise was undertaken using the addresses of local club secretaries which were published in football handbooks for 1890 and 1891 and those occasionally found in the press between 1889 and 1891.[70] Of the fifty-three identified this way, thirty-eight were traced in the 1891 census and their details are shown in Appendix 7.

The age of most of the secretaries was remarkably low. The majority were teenagers and only one was over twenty-five. This suggests that club officers were usually drawn from the playing membership and also that local teams, at least, were not able to rely on older enthusiasts to run their affairs. The absence of a committee comprising former players might partly explain the fragility of many of the clubs. An example of a prominent and yet youthful administrator was Wilson Tunley, a seventeen year old, who was secretary of two clubs, St. David's and Cardiff Juniors and who was closely involved in setting up the Cardiff and District Football Union a little over a year later. Seventeen of the secretaries were born in Cardiff and six elsewhere in south Wales; six came from the west country, eight from other parts of England and one from Scotland. They were predominantly clerks or tradesmen. Two-thirds had white collar occupations. Sixteen were clerical workers and there were also three shop assistants, a commercial traveller, a proof-reader's assistant and an eighteen year old teacher. One was a schoolboy. There was also a hardware merchant who was probably employed in his father's business and who might be classified as middle-class, as he lived in Richmond Road, one of the better streets, and his club was Cardiff Cyclists. The remainder were all working men. Their occupations were: plumber (three), plumber's apprentice, compositor, printer's apprentice, coach trimmer, coach painter, baker, currier, hairdresser, plasterer and telegraph messenger. Apart from the hardware merchant, none of the thirty-eight was obviously a member of the professional or

[70] *WM* and *Evening Express* 1889-1891; *Cardiff and South Wales Footballer's Companion 1890-91*, pp. 3-67;

business middle classes or lived in the more fashionable areas of the town. Neither were any from the unskilled labouring classes. It is interesting to compare this with the study by Johnes and Garland, who researched seventeen Welsh soccer club secretaries from 1880 and found that they had a predominantly lower middle-class profile, dominated by clerks with an age range of nineteen to thirty-eight.[71]

If this group is representative of the wider Cardiff rugby community around 1890, then it can be argued that the organisation of the game at the local level was largely dominated by young members of the skilled and semi-skilled working class and lower status middle class. This supports the views of earlier researchers, who have argued that the growth of football in England in the late nineteenth century came substantially from within the working class rather than from the efforts of the middle class. The evidence above is admittedly limited, but when combined with that on the level of participation across the town, it does suggest that workers in Cardiff also made their own culture, rather than having it organised for them. It is unlikely that there were many middle-class reformers in the ranks of the secretaries of Cardiff's clubs.[72] Therefore, David Andrews' argument that between 1870 and 1890 "the Welsh urban bourgeoisie dominated the game in terms of administration and participation" requires some qualification.[73]

By 1911, Cardiff had one of the highest proportions of males born outside the United Kingdom. However, apart from the Irish, no other ethnic groups formed their own clubs. Foreigners can be identified occasionally in team lists. For instance, Raoul Foa, the captain of Cardiff in 1878-9, was Jewish, half Italian and half French. How much black participation there was in nineteenth-century Cardiff rugby is impossible to estimate. At least one black player, Charles Lewis of Grange Stars, had a few games in the centre for

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Welsh Athlete Football Handbook 1891-2, pp. 43-130.

[71] Martin Johnes and Ian Garland, ' "The New Craze": football and society in north-east Wales, c. 1870-90', *Welsh History Review*, 22, 2 (2004), pp. 286-7.

[72] Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), p. 135.

[73] David Andrews, 'Sport and the Masculine Hegemony of the Modern Nation: Welsh Rugby, Culture and Society, 1890-1914' in John Nauright and Timothy J.L. Chandler (eds.), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (London, 1996), p. 68.

Cardiff first and second teams in 1898-9, so it is possible, therefore, though there is no evidence for it, that other black players were members of local clubs.[74]

To summarise then, until the early 1880s, the game in Cardiff was dominated by the middle class. Towards the end of the 1870s, however, changes began to take place. New clubs, which working men were able to join, began to emerge and these soon became socially mixed by the first half of the 1880s. Even the Cardiff club admitted workmen by 1881-2 and, by the middle of the decade, they comprised a substantial part of the First XV. By 1890, local clubs were largely dominated by the working and lower middle classes. However, the administration of Cardiff and other senior clubs and the WFU continued to remain in the control of the professional and business middle class. This, and the previous chapter, therefore, provides a detailed confirmation of Gareth Williams' description of Welsh rugby.

> Though an educated middle-class elite dominated the higher echelons of the game, lower down the scale clubs were run by working men for working men. Welsh rugby cannot be portrayed merely as a middle-class salvage operation, rescuing a sullen working class from the aimless and morally damaging attractions of the pub or gin-palace. Administered by the few it [was] played and watched by the many.[75]

[74] *WM* 26 Sept. 1898, *SWDN* 26 Sept. 1898, 5 Apr. 1899 (Lewis).
[75] Gareth Williams, 'Community, Class and Rugby', p. 11.

CHAPTER 5

RUGBY 'FOOTBALL, OR, LIFE IN CARDIFF': THE WIDER IMPACT[1]

The popularity of rugby in Victorian Cardiff had an impact which went beyond the game itself. The large numbers playing and attending matches in the town opened up many new opportunities for a range of businesses. Though it is impossible now to provide precise details, there are still numerous indicators of the general economic impact on Cardiff.

Sport was transformed by the improvements in transport which greatly extended the range of support and participation. Transport companies were quick to recognise the rugby's commercial attractions. As soon as large crowds began to attend major matches, rail companies responded with cheap excursions. For instance, in 1886, the GWR ran a special day excursion from Cardiff to Blackheath for the England international, "leaving time to visit a theatre." It became a regular practice to run special trains both for Cardiff's home and away fixtures, particularly, with Newport and Swansea but also others like Penygraig. For a Newport match in 1894, attended by 15,000, GWR ran two special trains each with forty coaches and added sixteen extra ones on the regular 1.30 service. The only way that supporters could realistically travel to matches outside their immediate locality was by rail; fortunately, south Wales had one of the most densely developed railway networks in the world and Cardiff was at its centre. The game could not have expanded as it did without this infrastructure but it was a mutually beneficial relationship for both rugby and railway companies.[2]

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[1] *Football, or, Life in Cardiff* was the title of a play performed at the Theatre Royal in 1886. *South Wales Daily News* 15, 17 June 1886.

[2] Neil Tranter, *Sport, Economy and Society in Britain, 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 34; *SWDN* 21 Dec. 1885 (Blackheath); *SWDN* 30 Oct. 1890 (Penygraig); *SWDN* 15 Jan. 1894 (Newport); John Williams, *Was Wales Industrialised? Essays in Modern Welsh History* (Llandysul, 1995), p. 42 (rail network).

This was also true for local operators. The outward spread of tram and bus services made it much easier for players and supporters to get to matches, whilst at the same time the operators benefited from the increased takings. All the main tram routes in the 1880s and 1890s ran close to the Arms Park and Sophia Gardens.[3] One of the reasons why Cardiff Harlequins chose their new ground in Newport Road in 1891 was that there was then a tram terminal at the *Royal Oak* near the entrance.[4] There would have also been increased trade for the town's cabmen, ferrying players and supporters between stations, grounds and pubs.[5] Spectators at Penarth-Cardiff games not only travelled by bus and train but also by boat.[6] Not every town possessed adequate transport facilities for the exceptional demands of big matches. Previewing the 1893 Ireland international, "Old Stager" complained that getting transport from Llanelli station to Stradey was virtually impossible and that most supporters had to make the long journey on foot. He added that there had been similar problems at Swansea a few years earlier.[7]

Daunton shows that, as Cardiff developed as the regional centre of south Wales, its central area was transformed from the 1880s as a commercial and service centre.[8] Pubs, restaurants, hotels and theatres close to the Arms Park and Sophia Gardens were readily able to attract the custom of players and supporters. It is easy to ignore the importance of this social infrastructure to the development of the game in Cardiff. In 1891, "Old Stager" reported supporters' complaints that there were not enough pubs and hotels in Llanelli to cater for the crowds attending the Ireland international. The Irish FU unsuccessfully requested that the 1893 international be moved from Llanelli because of its inadequate hotel provision.[9]

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[3] R.H. Morgan, 'The Development of an Urban Transport System: The Case of Cardiff', *Welsh History Review*, 13, 2 (1986), pp. 178-181.
[4] *SWDN* 4 Apr. 1892 (terminal), 10 Oct. 1891. The Quins initially erected changing rooms at the *Royal Oak* pub.
[5] A Swansea company's advertisement in *The Handy Football Guide (Mortimer's) For South Wales and Monmouthshire: 1896-97* (Cardiff, 1896), p. 19 offered "special terms to football teams" for cabs, carriages, phaetons, brakes and hansoms.
[6] *SWDN* 1 Oct. 1891. Spectators travelled "by rail, 'bus, or boat" to the Penarth v Cardiff match.
[7] *SWDN* 10 Mar. 1893.
[8] M.J. Daunton, *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1977), p. 54.

After Cardiff's victory at Swansea in 1888, the team was met at the station by brass bands and carried to the Angel "and there was a deal of cheering *and much consumption of alcohol.*" [10] "Old Stager" wrote after Wales' first ever win over England at Cardiff in 1893:

> The players ... were borne away to the Angel shoulder high ... later on *every hotel bar along the main streets was blocked to the street doors*, and everywhere football was the main topic of conversation. The victory of Wales simply sent the population of Cardiff, plus the thousands of visitors, off their blessed chumps.[11]

Certainly, then, the proprietors of such establishments had every reason to support and encourage this new trade. Tom Mallett was undoubtedly a lover of rugby, but when he donated a cup for competition to the C&DFU in 1893, it was also a calculated business move. When he later left the *New Market Tavern* for the *Blue Bell*, the Union's headquarters went with him.[12]

Sports outfitters and photographers were other local entrepreneurs who benefited greatly from the growth of the game. T. Page Wood, who originally specialised in shooting and fishing, swiftly recognised the new lucrative sports goods market offered by football. In 1886, he shrewdly donated a cup for competition amongst local clubs and as a direct result, the (first) Cardiff District Football Union was set up and he was appointed its President.[13] Some were suspicious of Page Wood's motives, however. "One would imagine the Union existed as an advertising medium" wrote one disgruntled *SWDN* correspondent.[14] Describing the astonishing popularity of rugby, the weekly *Cardiff Argus* commented in 1888:

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[9] *SWDN* 9 Mar. 1891; WFU minutes 11 Feb. 1893.
[10] *SWDN* 16 Jan. 1888 italics added.
[11] *SWDN* 9 Jan. 1893 italics added.
[12] *SWDN* 9 Nov. 1893.
[13] *SWDN* 28 Aug. 1886; *Cardiff District Football Union Handbook 1886-87* (Cardiff, 1886), p. [3]; John Musselwhite, *The Butcher Boys of Donkey Island: An Historical Profile of Penarth R.F.C.* (Penarth, 1980), p. 9. The competition ended in 1889-90, when Penarth won the trophy outright after three successive victories. It is still in the possession of the club.
[14] *SWDN* 28 Apr. 1890.

> There is no kind of out-door amusement which has become so thoroughly popular during the last few years, in South Wales, as Football ... A glance at the stock of "Footballs" just received by [Page Wood] would lead to the conclusion that they were stored there for a century, but they are only "this season's goods", and are of all kinds and sizes, from the "match" balls to the small ones used in the junior clubs connected with our educational establishments. [15]

Another of Page Wood's initiatives was his football handbook, which ran to at least seven editions by 1891-2.[16] These contained fixture lists and club details but were an imaginative way of promoting his goods which included balls, bladders, jerseys, caps, gloves, shin guards, ankle guards and football insurance policies.[17] Such was their success, that he extended his publishing activities in 1891-2, by launching *The Welsh Athlete*, a weekly sports journal, primarily concerned with rugby. This, however, was a financial failure and it folded before the end of the season. Other outfitters followed his lead: Evans and Co, of the Royal Arcade, sold footballs, jerseys, shorts, badges and presentation caps, while Anderson's in Queen Street supplied jerseys, boots and bags and donated gold medals for the Mallet Cup winners.[18]

It became a regular practice to photograph teams at major matches, though it was tedious and time-consuming and invariably described as an ordeal in match accounts. A football handbook for 1896-7 contained advertisements for Goldie of Cardiff and Dando of Newport, both of whom specialised in supplying team photographs to the public.[19] Others found ways of cashing in on the sport, not always to the liking of "Old Stager". "It has come at last. The ingenious advertiser, noting the popularity of football, has commenced to turn even it to account." This was his response to the enterprise of an insurance agent who distributed publicity handbills with portraits of Cardiff players.[20]

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[15] *Cardiff Argus* 26 Sept. 1888.
[16] *The Welsh Athlete and West of England Cycling News Football Handbook 1891-2* (Cardiff, 1891), p. [5]. The preface refers to its being the seventh edition of the "Football Handbook". Later versions were produced by other publishers.
[17] *Cardiff and South Wales Footballer's Companion: 1890-91* (Cardiff, 1890), pp. 28, 30, 32; *Welsh Athlete Football Handbook 1891-2*, p. [2].
[18] *Welsh Athlete Football Handbook 1891-2*, p. [47] (Evans); *Mortimer's Football Guide for South Wales and Monmouthshire: Season, 1894-95*, p. 42 (Anderson's); *SWDN* 14 Oct. 1889 (medals).
[19] *Handy Football Guide: 1896-97*, pp. [20] (Goldie), [16] (Dando).
[20] *SWDN* 14 Oct. 1889.

Following years of relative indifference, the local press in Cardiff eventually came to recognise the commercial advantages of increasing its coverage of the sport. By the early 1880s, "Pressmen of the old school seemed to have tumbled to the fact that a game which was attracting the attention of thousands week after week was worth shedding ink over." [21] Croll points out that the greater press coverage given to sport by this time meant that it was no longer possible for readers to ignore it.[22]

Kenneth Morgan argues that the *South Wales Daily News* generally gave little prominence to cultural affairs.[23] Nevertheless, on the whole, this Liberal daily tended to cover the game in rather more depth than the Tory *Western Mail.* This may have been due to the influence of one the *SWDN*'s proprietors, Alex Duncan, a former player who served on the committees of both Cardiff and the WFU at the time. Both papers were Cardiff based but they also enjoyed a wider regional circulation. In the maelstrom of Welsh club rivalry, this could sometimes create tensions with their readership, which didn't arise with their more locally based competitors in Newport, Swansea and Llanelli. Following the reporting of a major dispute involving Cardiff, William Wilkins, the secretary of Llanelli, complained, probably justifiably, "Both the [Cardiff] daily papers, while professing to cater for South Wales, hold a brief for Cardiff first." [24]

As the game's popularity grew, columnists like "Old Stager", "Dagon", "Goal Post", "Welsh Athlete" and "Touchstone" became regular contributors. Their columns would sometimes include highly provocative views on the conduct of the WFU, team selection, performances of players, and behaviour of clubs, players and spectators. This would often stimulate much correspondence. Indeed, the press provided a vital forum for participants and supporters to voice their opinions, initiate ideas and resolve disputes of

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[21] *SWDN* 7 Nov. 1892.
[22] Andrew J. Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture, Public Space and Urban Meaning, Merthyr c.1870-1914* (PhD thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1997), p. 257.
[23] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford, 1982 edn.), p. 51.
[24] *WM* 17 Nov. 1892.

all kinds. Journalists sometimes even became directly involved in the game; for example, H.W. Wells ("Welsh Athlete") was instrumental in setting up C&DFU.[25]

Gradually, the number of columns devoted to football in the Monday edition (of the *SWDN* at least) increased, so that by 1896, they often took up nearly two pages. A surprisingly large amount of coverage was given to matches played by local minor clubs. The *SWDN* even provided a special form for clubs to send in match reports post free.[26] The two main papers' sister titles (*South Wales Echo, Evening Express, Cardiff Times, Weekly Mail*) also dealt with the game more frequently and the evening papers, in particular, began to take on more regular day-to-day coverage with, for instance, further commentary by "Old Stager" etc. The special late Saturday edition was another device to cash in on the seemingly limitless interest in rugby.[27] The practice of printing the forthcoming week's fixtures began in the 1880s and local team selections in the 1890s. Money prizes for predicting the results of leading Welsh club matches were also sometimes offered.[28] However, by the turn of the century the amount of space devoted to rugby began to be reduced somewhat, mainly to accommodate greater coverage of soccer, especially Football League matches. The main sufferers were *local* rugby clubs, who were less frequently reported than before.[29] Coverage of the South African War considerably reduced the reporting of all sport, including major matches, during 1899-1900.

The great interest in rugby in Wales inevitably led to an increased commercialisation of the game itself. By the 1890s, Cardiff had become a major gate-taking club, with a substantial annual income. It was now effectively a business in its own right and this was recognised in 1892, when the club secretary began to be paid for his services.

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[25] *WM* 9 Nov. 1892.
[26] *SWDN* 13 Sept. 1887.
[27] *SWDN* 12 Jan. 1885. An early example was the special Saturday edition of the *South Wales Echo* printed for the 1885 international in Edinburgh.
[28] *WM* 13 Nov. 1895.
[29] For example, *SWDN* 16 Jan. 1899.

According to "Old Stager" in 1898, a game which should have been a pastime was fast becoming a business. [30]

During this decade, five figure attendances at the Arms Park were frequently reported. Whilst these may have been exaggerations, they do indicate that there was a substantial and growing interest in watching the club game. Commenting on various press estimates of the crowd at the Llwynypia v Cardiff match in 1897, which varied from 6,000 to 16,000, "Welsh Athlete" reminded readers, "Popular estimates of the sizes of football crowds are, as a rule, far too large ... [But it] is a significant fact of the extreme interest taken in football by the masses." [31]

If the reported figures are accepted at face value, then throughout the 1890s, Cardiff often played in front of crowds in excess of 10,000, while at key games, especially versus Newport, there could be many as 20,000 supporters. The *Western Mail* even claimed that such was the rivalry between the two clubs that interest in their games sometimes exceeded that of international matches. "Whatever may be the interest attached to international ... games, so far as Cardiff and Newport are concerned, it pales before the fierce fire of enthusiasm that burns on the occasion of matches between the towns." The two clubs were, after all, Britain's "leading exponents" of the game.[32] Fixtures against Blackheath and Christmas and Easter touring sides were also highly popular and could draw crowds of over 15,000. In 1899, 20,000 attended the matches with Swansea and the Barbarians.[33]

The social composition of these match crowds is difficult to determine precisely, though their size and the character of local participation in rugby make it likely that there were many working-class spectators. One Cardiff supporter clearly believed the club belonged to the whole community, and not just the elite, when he wrote in 1892 about the "general

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[30] *SWDN* 25 July 1892 (payment), 21 Feb. 1898 (business).
[31] *WM* 20 Oct. 1897.
[32] *WM* 25 Nov. 1895.
[33] Match reports *SWDN* and *WM* 1891-1900.

public, who are in reality the shareholders [of Cardiff]".[34] There were often references to the mixed social character of the crowds in the press. "Spectators at local games are derived from all classes of society".[35] Workmen's tickets were introduced by Cardiff in 1890 when 968 were sold, equal to the number of members' and season tickets. In 1892, out of 2,700 members' and season tickets sold, 1,678 were workmen's.[36] In 1897, club membership was the largest in Wales at 1,200 and by 1899 this had grown to 2,000. [37]

Throughout the period, there were frequent references to supporters who attempted to gain access without paying and it was usually implied that these were members of the lower classes. Working-class "hobbledehoys" and "rowdies" were also blamed for crowd disturbances, for example, at the Newport match in 1897, when the referee was attacked and the Arms Park suspended as a result.[38] There is also little doubt whom the *SWDN* had in mind when it reported on the behaviour at the C&DFU cup finals in 1897.

> [There was] no excuse for the disgraceful language used by a number of roughs who had ensconced themselves at the back of the stand and who, notwithstanding the presence of several ladies, criticised the play of the teams in brutal 'Billingsgate'.[39]

Females were often mentioned in match reports, though in what numbers they attended is impossible to estimate. For example, there were "hundreds of ladies" in the 7,000 crowd at the 1891 Gloucester match. By 1898, there were complaints at the Cardiff AGM that they were monopolising the grandstand. Nevertheless, the policy of allowing women to attend free of charge, so long as they were accompanied by a member, was continued, despite a criticism that their hats were too large.[40]

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[34] *WM* 5 Jan. 1892.
[35] *WM* 27 Jan. 1897.
[36] C.S. Arthur, *The Cardiff Rugby Football Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1906* (Cardiff, 1908), p. 102; *WM* 18 July 1892.
[37] *SWDN* 19 Oct. 1897; *WM* 29 July 1899.
[38] *SWDN* 15 Feb. 1897.
[39] *SWDN* 15 Mar. 1897.
[40] *WM* 16 Nov. 1891 (Gloucester); *SWDN* 30 July 1898 (AGM).

As a result of growing membership and attendances, the club's income also grew steadily, although reports of its prosperity were not *always* well received. In 1889, there was some disagreement with the Marquis of Bute over match entrance fees. He was concerned about rumours that Cardiff were using this income on lavish dinners and other benefits for members but it was made clear that the money was needed for maintaining and developing the ground, in the wider interests of the town's prestige. "The club [is] not an individual enterprise. It was for the honour of the town that they charged for admission." Bute seems to have accepted this argument. No doubt it was largely for his benefit that it was announced at the 1897 AGM that the club was run purely in the interest of sport and that no other club in Britain could boast of such a good record in charitable donations. [41]

Cardiff *did* have substantial financial liabilities in maintaining a ground suitable for first-class club and international matches. The pitch was a particular problem. As recently as 1848-1856, the ancient course of the Taff had been diverted from what became the Arms Park, so the playing surface and surrounding areas were frequently muddy and occasionally flooded.[42] After the Llanelli match in 1884, "Old Stager" complained of having to wade through "a dreary expanse of mud and slush" to get to the pitch which was covered in "numerous miniature lakes". In another game the following season, the whole of one side of the pitch was under water and the players' struggles in the wet caused great amusement for the spectators. When Cardiff played the Maoris in 1888, the ground was "in a deplorable state, wet, muddy, with pools of water on the pitch." As late as the Thursday before the Scotland match in 1890, the pitch was still entirely under water. In the depth of winter, it was often necessary to protect the playing surface from freezing with straw, whilst the arrangements which had to be made to enable the England international to go ahead in 1893 have become part of rugby's folk lore.

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[41] *SWDN* 29 Aug. 1889 (honour of town); *SWDN* 31 July 1897 (AGM).
[42] Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That: Essays on Rugby Football, Sport and Welsh Society* (Llandysul, 1991), pp. 56-7.

Eventually in 1895, the poor conditions necessitated taking up the whole playing surface, laying down of new drains and re-turfing the pitch at a cost of over £1000.[43]

With the growing numbers of spectators came demands to improve facilities. There was constant pressure for new accommodation, such as grandstands and standing areas, press boxes, fencing to replace ropes around the pitch, footboards and paths etc. After 20,000 attended the Newport game, "Old Stager" warned that the club could not afford to be complacent and recommended the building of yet another stand. "That the expenditure on accommodation for visitors ... has been lavish everyone will admit, but the committee must keep in mind the fact that football is increasing in popularity and that the population of the town is growing." [44]

C.S. Arthur was secretary of Cardiff at the time and his 1908 club history details the continual annual expenditure on improvements. For instance, the grandstand was built in 1885 for £362 and two wings were added eight years later at a cost of £437, providing seating for 1,200. In 1890, new standing areas were constructed along the entire length of the ground for £254 and these were enlarged for £106 in 1894. Another £103 was spent on repairing and erecting stands in 1896. More care had to be taken with the standard of construction following the collapse of a stand at the river end during a match with Swinton in 1893, which resulted in compensation payments to several injured spectators.[45] As a result of all this expenditure, the club chairman was able to claim, no doubt as a reminder to the WFU, that only three other grounds in the Kingdom, "Crystal Palace, Aston Villa and Everton", could have accommodated the crowd of perhaps 40,000 which attended the Ireland international in March 1899.[46]

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[43] *SWDN* 22 Dec. 1884 (Llanelli); *SWDN* 12 Oct. 1885 (pitch under water); Gareth Williams, 'Taffs Acre: The Pre-1900 Years', in David Parry-Jones, *Taffs Acre: History and Celebration of Cardiff Arms Park* (London, 1984), pp. 43-4 (Maoris); *SWDN* 3 Feb. 1890 (Scotland); Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby*, p. 122 (new drains).
[44] *SWDN* 22 Oct. 1894.
[45] Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby*, pp. 64-138; *SWDN* 27 Oct. 1890; *SWDN* 29 July 1893.
[46] *WM* and *SWDN* 29 July 1899.

Improvements to the ground and accommodation, therefore, were a constant drain on the club's resources, but at the same time they provided occasional business for local architects, builders, contractors and suppliers, as well as employment for local tradesmen and casual workers. Although it was the WFU, rather than the Cardiff club, which met the bill, the scale of the arrangements for ensuring the pitch was playable for the 1893 England match is worth mentioning. Some fifty-eight men were employed from Tuesday to Saturday before the match attending the coal fires in the five hundred buckets and thirty hot boiler plates placed around the ground. Then at noon on match day another fifteen men were taken on to clear the pitch. Around eighteen tons of coal were burned and the total cost of the operation amounted to over £200.[47]

For some clubs, the financial burden of ground costs could be too great to sustain. When Cardiff Harlequins leased a former brick field from the Tredegar Estate, they spent a massive £2,000 in preparing the football field and cycling track and erecting stands, changing accommodation and fencing. This over-ambitious expenditure almost certainly led to the club's eventual demise, though their enterprise was not totally wasted, as the "Harlequins" ground is still used by rugby teams well over a century later.[48]

In an age when the State took little responsibility for the disadvantaged in society, it is not surprising that Welsh rugby became actively involved in supporting charity, notwithstanding the heavy burdens mentioned above. Cardiff's steadily improving financial position enabled the club to make regular contributions to local charities. Arthur's history shows that from 1890-1 onwards, large donations, often of several hundreds of pounds, were made each year. In 1892-3, the club established a scholarship at Cardiff University. Sometimes special matches might be arranged, such as that with Cardiff District in 1890 for the Llanerch Colliery disaster fund. Alternatively, the whole proceeds of the gate might be donated, as happened with the 1893 Swansea match,

[47] Williams, *Taffs Acre*, p. 43; *SWDN* 9 Jan. 1893; *WM* 5, 7 Jan. 1893. This remarkable event is indicative of the importance of coal in the Welsh economy and in the making of Cardiff.
[48] *SWDN* 10 Oct. 1892 (£2,000). Between 1898 and 1970, the "Harlequins" was exclusively used by Cardiff High School; and from 1947 to 1961 it was the Cardiff High School Old Boys RFC ground. It is now the home of St. Peter's RFC.

following the Tondu Park Slip Colliery explosion. By 1897, the club had donated over £3,000 to charity which was held to be a record for a sports club anywhere in Britain.[49] Even the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* wrote, "There is a good deal to admire in a club which can be so openhanded as this."[50] As well as distributing club funds, Cardiff allowed teams, such as boilermakers and cabmen, to use the Arms Park for specific charities. Leading players would often turn out in these games to help boost the takings. The WFU too also contributed to local Cardiff charities, such as the Infirmary and Nazareth House. That the game was able to display such generosity not only reveals that it was in a healthy condition by the 1890s, but also that it saw itself as an integral part of the social fabric. Such charitable contributions were also important in cementing the wider perception of sports clubs in general, and Cardiff rugby club in particular, as community and civic institutions. [51]

It is sometimes alleged that the commercialisation of the game must have inevitably led to the payment of players. No doubt broken time was being paid by in Wales, though even the most successful valley clubs did not have huge resources. Arranging employment at the local pit was probably as common as making direct cash payments, though it was still a breach of the professional regulations. Dunning and Sheard, however, imply that Cardiff must have paid their players during the 1890s, given the substantial sums which the club received from gate money. They draw on details of Cardiff's gate receipts which were published in *Report on Rugby* (1959) by Morgan and Nicholson, who obtained the figures unacknowledged from C.S. Arthur's 1908 club history. Quoting *Report on Rugby*, Dunning and Sheard state that "clubs were soon making enough money to pay players' ... expenses, if not more." Yet this argument ignores the very substantial costs which Cardiff incurred in match expenses, ground maintenance and development and charitable donations. Whilst there is no doubt that players were looked after very well, there is no *evidence* that Cardiff regularly made

[49] *SWDN* 20 Oct. 1897 (£3,000).
[50] Quoted in *SWDN* 26 Oct. 1897.
[51] Arthur, *Cardiff Rugby*, pp. 102-128; *SWDN* 14 Apr. 1896 (details of WFU donations). That several Catholic organisations were beneficiaries may reflect the anxiety of rugby administrators to please the Marquis of Bute, the owner of the Arms Park and a prominent convert to Roman Catholicism.

direct cash payments. In 1895, "Welsh Athlete" noted, rather critically, that wealthy Welsh clubs could now afford to pay for boots, jerseys, rail fares and hotels and "every tittle tattle of expenses" but he did not accuse them of directly paying players.[52] There are a number of reasons which suggest that it is unlikely that Cardiff did so as a matter of course. The club ran the serious risk that the Marquis of Bute might refuse to continue leasing the Arms Park, if it became known that they were not operating as an essentially amateur operation. In addition, Dunning and Sheard argue that rugby in Wales was controlled by men who did not adhere to the amateur ethos, but their example of Cardiff is a poor one. Most of the senior officials who controlled the club at this time would not have agreed to the payment of players and probably would have resigned had this happened. Unlike the officials of *some* Welsh clubs, they were strongly opposed to broken time payments at the time of the Northern Union breakaway.[53] Finally, the number of working-class Cardiff players who did sign for professional clubs at this time suggests that there was no great financial benefit for them to remain in Cardiff.

A Popular Urban Culture

Clearly, in many ways then, the impact of rugby on the urban life of Victorian Cardiff was greater than is usually acknowledged. Discussing Cardiff's cultural amenities around the 1850s to the 1870s, William Rees, in his history of Cardiff, refers to the Cardiff Athenaeum, the Classical Society, the Blue Ribbon Choir, the Cardiff Naturalists Society and many other similar worthy organisations. However, apart from a brief reference to the formation of Cardiff Cricket Club, he ignores the new popular culture of sport which, as we have seen, was beginning to have such a powerful hold on many of the town's citizens.[54] In a society where the quality of civic life was restricted compared

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[52] Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (London, 2005 edn.), p. 191; William J. Morgan and Geoffrey Nicholson, *Report on Rugby* (London, 1959), p. 78; *WM* 12 Aug. 1895.
[53] *SWDN* 25 Sept. 1893. Cardiff (and Newport) were reported to be "dead against" broken time payments.
[54] William Rees, *A History of Cardiff* (Cardiff, 1969 edn.), pp. 326-7. In a footnote (116), Rees adds, "More organised sport was at this time becoming popular." However, the only example he provides of this popularity is two Cardiff mountaineers who died on Mont Blanc.

to that in older and more prestigious cities, the importance of successful sports teams cannot be over-estimated.

Mitchell and Kenyon's recently discovered films, which vividly portray British urban life around the turn of the century, graphically reveal how important street culture was at the time.[55] Therefore, the presence of large numbers of footballers and supporters congregating on public parks or trudging back to their headquarters every Saturday must have been a familiar part of the urban scene to everyone, even the uninterested. The huge crowds of merry, money-spending supporters of all classes, regularly converging on the town centre for major club matches and internationals, quickly became a distinguishing characteristic of life in Cardiff, as it remains today.

> Cosmopolitan Cardiff ... was thoroughly Welsh on Saturday afternoon.[56]
>
> Half the male population of Cardiff, and not a few of the gentler sex, ... seemed to have found their way to the Park and its neighbourhood.[57]
>
> On the roofs of the neighbouring business premises, warehouses etc. were hundreds of sightseers; in the trees a large number perched themselves, while some were even daring enough to plant themselves on the roof of the press box.[58]
>
> Westgate Street ... would have done credit to a Continental thoroughfare on a fete day.[59]

The composition of these crowds reflected Welsh society. At the Scotland match in 1896, the *Western Mail* noted the presence of colliers, tinplaters, Cardiff workmen ("not always Welsh"), drapers, coal-trimmers, businessmen from the docks, ladies and curates. There were even dissenting ministers, for "all the chapels in the world would not keep folks from the match." [60]

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[55] *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon*, (DVD), (BBC, 2005).
[56] *SWDN* 12 Feb. 1894 (Cardiff v Llanelli).
[57] *SWDN* 5 Mar. 1894 (Cardiff v Newport).
[58] *SWDN* 18 Mar. 1895 (Wales v Ireland).
[59] *SWDN* 20 Mar. 1899 (Wales v Ireland).
[60] *WM* 27 Jan. 1896.

Smith and Williams perceptively reveal how Welsh rugby had become the people's theatre.[61] Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that the theatre itself was quick to reflect this new popular culture. To promote their annual pantomimes, the casts of both the Theatre Royal and the Grand Theatre regularly played each other at rugby on the Arms Park. The 1890 pantomime at the Grand included a song about the "bold blue and black" as well as a "Great Football Ballet ... the sensation of Cardiff". The Whitsun 1886 production at the Theatre Royal was even *set* in the Arms Park during a match, and was called *Football, or, Life in Cardiff.* The hit song was a version of *Crawshay Bailey's Engine* adapted to members of Hancock's team and was received with such "enthusiastic acclamation" that several encores had to be given. Here is another example of just how far rugby had entered the lifeblood of Victorian Cardiff.[62]

By the 1880s, the Welsh press was regularly referring to rugby football as the national sport. Before the England international in Swansea in 1885, "Old Stager" claimed that the game had increased so greatly in popularity over the previous three or four years that it was "now recognised as a national pastime", so much so that it monopolised conversation over and above the safety of General Gordon and the Fenian outrages. It was the same in Cardiff. Commenting on the "lovers of the popular winter pastime" in 1890 the *SWDN* said of them "in Cardiff and district surely their name is legion." The same paper announced on the morning of the 1891 England match in Cardiff that "it has now become the one great popular pastime of the people". In Cardiff's pubs and hotels, rugby football became the main topic of conversation, involving those who weren't even regular followers of the game.[63]

The Welsh international Norman Biggs made some revealing remarks about the difference between rugby in Cardiff and London after he had turned out for Richmond in 1893. "What is the great difference between the London match and a Cardiff game? ...

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[61] David Smith and Gareth Williams, *Fields of Praise: The Official History of the Welsh Rugby Union 1881-1981* (Cardiff, 1980), p. 75; see also David Smith, 'People's Theatre – A Century of Welsh Rugby', *History Today*, 31, March (1981), pp. 31-6.
[62] *SWDN* 27 Dec. 1890 (pantomime), 15, 17 June 1886 (*Football, or, Life in Cardiff*).
[63] *SWDN* 2 (national pastime), 5 Jan. 1885 (Fenian), 22 July 1890 (legion), 3 Jan. 1891 (popular pastime).

At Richmond there was no need to exert myself, and nobody cared much who won – that's the difference." [64]

The *SWDN* columnist "Cosmos" was not particularly impressed with this obsession, but his remarks still reveal a great deal about rugby's place in the new popular urban culture. When he visited Cardiff Pier Head after the 1891 England match, he stopped to listen to the conversations of "the usual crowd of loafers."

> It was not the slackness of times; it was not Parnell; it was not the Disestablishment of the Church; it was not the utilization of the Welsh language, though from their accent, they were purely Welsh; it was not the strike in Scotland; it was not the selection of the head-constable of Glamorganshire; it was not intermediate education; it was not total abstinence; it was not the lowness of freights or the price of coal; it was not the severity of the weather – but what I heard was something about the backs being absolutely superior, and the forwards heeling out. I knew then the most absorbing topic of interest. The fact that there are twelve vessels laid up in Cardiff Docks ... idle; the fact that wages are declining – arts, industry may fade, but who cares as long as there is a football match, and sixpence with which to see it? [65]

[64] *WM* 28 Oct. 1893.
[65] *SWDN* 6 Jan. 1891.

CONCLUSIONS

Football was played across south Wales during the 1860s but it was sporadic and unstructured. Hybrid rules were the norm. The evidence suggests that the participants were middle and upper class. The comparatively late arrival of rugby is partly explained by the relatively small Welsh middle class and by the absence in the main urban centres of any large public schools and universities, which helped to establish the game elsewhere. It was eventually introduced mainly by old boys and masters from the major rugby playing public schools, especially those located in the west country. Locally, "private" and grammar schools were probably at least as important as the Welsh public schools.

The arrival of the game coincided with the demographic and industrial transformation of Wales and, during the 1870s, Welsh rugby too changed out of all recognition. What had been a minority and elite leisure pastime at the beginning of the decade was becoming, ten years later, a consuming passion enjoyed across the community. By this time, there were well over a hundred teams in existence.

The first organised rugby clubs began to emerge around 1870. The earliest identified in this research was located in Cardiff, thereby placing the town, contrary to the conventional view, at the very heart of the origin of the Welsh game. Within a few years, rugby became the established form of football played in south Wales. By the mid 1870s, all the major Welsh clubs had been formed; local organisation of the game was improving; and interest was beginning to spread beyond the game's original narrow social base. For the next two decades, association football remained very much a minority activity. It was, however, mainly in the coastal towns of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, and not the coalfield valleys as is often assumed, where Welsh enthusiasm for the game first materialised.

The demand for representative and competitive rugby emerged very early and was responded to with the formation of the SWFC in 1875 and the introduction of the Challenge Cup in 1877. Despite the infancy of the game in Wales, this was the first major open cup

competition in Britain. It had an immediate and lasting effect and was widely acknowledged by contemporaries as one of the main reasons for the game's subsequent popularity in Wales. Its early introduction reveals that competitiveness and inter-town rivalry was emerging even *before* the arrival of the working man. This was fuelled by the growing economic and political rivalry between the leading Welsh towns and it resulted in an increasing incidence of match disputes and disruption, sometimes involving violence by both players and supporters. As the events at the Newport-Cardiff cup match in 1880 show, this was happening before participation by working-class players was significant.

The first clubs were founded by the social elite for their own recreation. However, this soon changed. For instance, the merger of Cardiff Wanderers and Glamorgan in 1876 had the specific objective of creating a team which was more representative of Cardiff in its matches with its rivals. Though hard evidence is difficult to locate, by the end of the 1870s, Welsh working men were beginning to take up rugby.

Increasing competitiveness, especially in the cup, was matched by growing attendances. The two fed on each other. By the end of the decade, thousands were reported at major matches. This was probably how working men were drawn into the game, first as spectators, then as players. The middle class in Wales was relatively small, so as new clubs sprang up, they could not afford to turn potential players away, simply on grounds of social background. Similarly, if senior clubs wished to compete successfully, particularly with strong English teams, they had to select from a wider pool. This was a decisive turning point in the history of the Welsh game. Had working-class players been shut out, as happened elsewhere, then rugby in Wales would have stagnated and would never have risen much above English county standard, as was experienced in other sports. But crucially, civic and national pride was more important than social exclusivity. Before long, of course, workmen offered more than just making up the numbers. It was soon recognised that they possessed new and valuable qualities which could enhance the Welsh game.

The 1880-1 season was a vitally important one as it saw the formation of the Welsh Football Union which could now harness the game's enormous potential and, at the same

time, control the wilder excesses of the growing number of its adherents. The same year also saw the first appearance of the Welsh international team. This at last gave a national focus around which the game – in south Wales at least – could coalesce and, within a year, rugby was already being described as the national sport. The Cardiff club was closely involved in both these developments.

The growth in interest in both playing and watching rugby was as strong in Cardiff as anywhere in Wales. Whilst the extent of popular sport in the Victorian period has been largely ignored by the city's historians, it is clear that it had a major influence on the life of Cardiff. The emergence of rugby as a popular pastime, enjoyed by all classes in Cardiff, cannot be divorced from the huge economic, demographic and social changes experienced by the town in the second half of the nineteenth century. These changes were to influence strongly the distinctive character and culture of rugby in Cardiff.

Compared to many other towns in Britain, Cardiff's sporting culture was different. Rugby dominated; it enjoyed cross-class support; and, at the neighbourhood level, social improvers were less evident. In Wales, Cardiff was distinctive in several ways. There was the sheer number of its clubs and players. Though working-class participation was strong, there was, nevertheless, a notable middle-class involvement. The archetypal Welsh team, comprised of hard-bitten colliers, so beloved of some writers, simply did not exist in Cardiff. The pronounced attachment to the game by the town's Catholic schools and parishes was another distinguishing aspect of the local game. These features, and others touched on below, helped to create the distinctive character of Cardiff "district" rugby.

Cardiff became the largest town in Wales from the 1870s, mainly by attracting large numbers of young migrants. Given the town's growing industrial and commercial prominence, these newcomers included many members of the mercantile and professional classes. It is not surprising, therefore, that Cardiff was a focus for early Welsh rugby: it is surprising, however, that some commentators have suggested that Cardiff lagged behind other centres in taking up the game.

This study has revealed a previously unrecognised scale of participation in rugby during the years 1870 to 1900. Whilst the research was largely confined to Cardiff, it suggests that the extent of rugby's penetration into nineteenth-century Wales was even greater than has previously been assumed. Therefore, simply relying on the number of clubs in membership of the WFU, as a measure of the game's popularity, clearly grossly underestimates the actual extent of the game.

Whilst many of the "clubs" identified were short lived or transient, their existence nevertheless provides a measure of the depth of interest in the game. During the first eight years of the 1890s, there were, on average, over 200 teams each season in Cardiff and district. The sheer number involved in playing the game in the town, therefore, calls into question the often expressed contention that Welsh rugby was essentially a valleys phenomenon. Only by the late 1890s are there signs of a decline in participation. This occurred partly because soccer at last began to penetrate the sporting culture of the town, largely through the introduction of the game in elementary schools and through the arrival of migrants from soccer playing regions.

Rugby had become firmly established as the first sport of the town's middle and working classes by the 1880s. It provided an accessible means through which newcomers could identify with their new community, show allegiance to it and enter into its social life. In so doing, it helped to develop a sense of neighbourhood, civic and national identity amongst a diverse population.

The detailed analysis of the background of clubs contrasts with research into English soccer at this time. Though there *were* many church, workplace and pub teams in Cardiff, their overall importance was much less marked. They comprised only around a quarter of all teams, which was considerably lower than suggested in studies of English soccer. In addition, with the notable exception of a few Catholic parish clubs, they rarely featured amongst the strongest local adult teams.

The relatively smaller number of church teams may be partly explained by the general opposition to sport and its associated activities by Welsh nonconformists and by the antipathy towards "uncivilised" rugby by religious organisations in general. Catholic authorities seem to have been rather less critical, which was no doubt occasioned by their recognition that rugby had a special role to play in the assimilation of the Irish Catholic community. The relatively low number of workplace teams is partly a reflection of the nature of Cardiff's industrial economy, where there was little manufacturing and where many workers were employed in casual waterfront occupations. Neither case of church or workplace, therefore, suggests that there was a strong element of middle-class "social control" in the establishment of rugby in Cardiff. The number of pub teams was insignificant though since most clubs used public houses as their headquarters, their contribution to the game was, nevertheless, still immense.

On the other hand, neighbourhood and street teams were clearly the overwhelming choice of most players. Research into rugby in Rochdale produced similar findings, which may perhaps indicate there were different emphases in club formation in the two branches of football. In one of the most rapidly growing towns in Britain, the popularity of neighbourhood teams was probably a response to the need to accommodate newcomers quickly into the game, avoiding the need for membership of a pre-existing organisation.

The research also established that large numbers of youngsters were involved in school, street and junior rugby. Most of these teams appear to have been largely organised by the boys themselves. Even with senior clubs, it was apparent that club officials were often very young and certainly predominantly of a playing age.

The investigation into the background of Cardiff's players in the 1870s confirms the widely held view that the game was introduced and initially played by a social elite, largely drawn from the mercantile and professional classes and at least some of whom had been educated at public school. However, this dominance first began to erode by the end of the decade with the arrival of lower status middle-class and working-class players. By the early 1880s, new neighbourhood clubs, in which working men appeared, were springing up. Cardiff

were including working men by 1881-2 and by the middle of the decade they comprised a significant proportion of the First XV. The very first working-class Welsh international, William Stadden, came through this system.

Thus, from the mid 1880s, Cardiff sat at the apex of a growing pyramid of local clubs from whom it was constantly able to renew its teams. In one sense, then, even though the club was still technically a private organisation, Cardiff can be seen as a "representative" team, embracing the "region" of Cardiff and district. It was certainly regarded as an institution which represented the whole of Cardiff by its many supporters. In this respect, Cardiff was no different from any of the other leading Welsh clubs.

Growth at the local club level was stimulated by the continued success of the Cardiff team, playing with a revolutionary new style which it had pioneered. Cardiff now had one of the best club sides in Britain. Since the team was essentially a representative one, players could aspire to progress via an extensive and comprehensive network of neighbourhood and junior clubs. Though class barriers undoubtedly still existed, the over-riding demand from spectators, general public and press was for success on the field, so working-class players could and did find themselves representing their town and even their country.

The research has shown that by 1890, local clubs were largely administered by young members of the skilled and semi-skilled working class and lower status middle class. Amongst the huge number of teams in Cardiff, only a few were exclusively middle-class and most middle-class players belonged to socially mixed clubs. This provides strong evidence that the game was largely played and administered by ordinary working people and not the well intentioned middle class. Rugby in Cardiff was at the centre of working-class culture. However, when it came to the WFU and the senior clubs, it was the professional and business class who continued to control the game and who ensured that it did not fall into the hands of a more democratic representation. With the major gate taking clubs dominating the Union, by restricting membership and by operating a cartel in the election of officers, they managed to retain overall control of the game in Wales.

The majority of teams which appeared in this period never belonged to any union or participated in any formal competitions. Of even those local clubs which did join the WFU or C&DFU in the 1890s, most enjoyed only a brief existence. There was a very high rate of annual turnover. Chronic instability well describes the condition of the local game in the period, with even successful clubs disappearing as quickly as they rose. While financial and ground problems were contributory causes, the main reason seems to have been the frequency with which players and officials moved on. By the late 1890s, district clubs often lost players as a result of financial inducements made by other Welsh clubs or those in the Northern Union.

The success of the Challenge Cup inspired the establishment of numerous other competitions across south Wales. By the 1890s, the thirst for competition had extended to the formation of leagues, though not for the senior Welsh clubs. Cardiff was no different to the rest of Wales. An early district cup was discontinued after four years in 1890. It was soon replaced, however, by the new C&DFU's Mallett Cup – still in existence – from 1893-4. Later, cups for less strong teams and youths teams were inaugurated and a two division league was established in 1894 and a third youth division was added in 1899. Similar developments occurred widely throughout the towns and valleys of south Wales, though these competitions were never co-ordinated nationally.

Rugby in Cardiff was facilitated by a range of convenient playing areas. In particular, Sophia Gardens, centrally located, close to pubs and transport routes, provided accommodation for countless teams and players and was even Cardiff's home for its first three years. The strategic location of the Arms Park had an even wider significance for the game in Wales and it still helps to sustain its popularity to the present day. Easily accessible from both within and without the town, it rapidly became – as it remains – a highly visible statement about the importance of rugby football to Cardiff and to Wales.

The level of interest in club and international rugby generated financial benefits for a range of businesses and organisations in the town, including transport operators; public house, hotel, restaurant and theatre proprietors; sports goods suppliers; photographers; publishers

and printers; newspaper proprietors; builders and contractors; and charities. Cardiff's new and rapidly expanding role, as the regional centre for south Wales, meant that the level and range of its transport, commercial and recreational infrastructure was better able to respond to the new demands from rugby than anywhere else in Wales. The proximity of the Arms Park and Sophia Gardens to the centre only reinforced this. Attendances at club matches at the Park regularly reached five figures by the 1890s and on occasion rose to 20,000. International matches could draw substantially more spectators. These crowds reflected the composition and character of Welsh industrial society – cosmopolitan, socially inclusive, disputatious and sometimes disrespectful of authority and disruptive.

The income of the major clubs rose substantially during the 1890s and this was particularly true of Cardiff. However, the club also incurred high costs in maintaining the playing surface which was especially prone to flooding. In addition, substantial sums were spent on continual ground improvements to meet the growing demands of spectators. The club was also very generous in making donations to local charities on a regular basis. Players were looked after very well in terms of equipment, travel and hotel expenses but there is no evidence that direct cash payments were made. This is not to say that it never happened, but given the social background of the committee and the likely opposition of the club's ground landlord, the Marquis of Bute, it is unlikely that such payments were ever the norm in the period.

For a whole generation of Victorians, rugby union was *the* Cardiff sport. Its early introduction gave it a seemingly unassailable lead over its rivals. The absence of any serious competition from any other team or mass spectator sport for over twenty-five years allowed rugby to become entrenched in the local popular culture.

Rugby was a highly visible feature of the urban scene. Whether it was the central prominence of the Arms Park, the presence of players on public parks and streets, or the large crowds regularly descending on the town for major matches, it would have been difficult for citizens to be completely unaware of the game's place in the life of the town.

The success of the town team was not only the focus of great civic pride, irrespective of class or even gender, but it also stimulated the growth in participation at a neighbourhood level. As the dominant sport in Cardiff, rugby provided a diverse and uprooted population, whether players or spectators, with a sense of belonging. Just as *Fields of Praise* argues that rugby contributed to a newfound sense of nationhood, this research suggests that, at a local level, it also contributed to a new sense of citizenship.[1]

Victorian Cardiff was a brash and thrusting newcomer on Britain's urban scene. It had a lot of catching up to do. It had no great history or distinguished institutions. "Cardiff was no Edinburgh or Athens of the west".[2] However, success in sport provided a means for Cardiff to make its presence felt, other than merely being recognised as the country's "Coal Metropolis". Ordinary citizens, businessmen, journalists and politicians – many of them born elsewhere – identified themselves with what was now "their" rugby team, which regularly recorded victories over the representatives of Britain's older and more prestigious cities. Just as the town of Cardiff had ascended from obscurity to become the world's most important centre for the export of coal, so too had its innovative rugby representatives risen to the very forefront of the game.

The study has revealed, for the first time, the extent of involvement in rugby in one locality in Victorian Wales. Cardiff was the largest town by the period but how different its experience was from that of other south Wales urban places needs to be examined in further research. Each town had its own context, of course, which helped to determine its particular rugby character and culture. Cardiff's unique geographic, demographic, economic, social, educational and religious structure all influenced the particular way in which rugby developed in the town. In a vibrant, competitive and innovative society, Cardiff's aspiring mercantile and professional class introduced the game and continued to control it at the highest level. The location and extent of the town's social and recreational infrastructure provided the physical environment in which the game could flourish. A massively

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[1] David Smith and Gareth Williams, *Fields of Praise: The Official History of the Welsh Rugby Union 1881-1981* (Cardiff, 1980) passim.
[2] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford, 1982 edn.), p. 22.

expanded and diverse working class adopted the game enthusiastically. They dominated it at its lower levels, took the level of participation to unprecedented heights and thereby contributed to the creation of the socially inclusive version of rugby football which has thrived in Wales ever since. Cardiff was a crucible of the game in Wales and it remained at the very heart of Welsh rugby throughout the Victorian period. Rugby was also at the heart of the life of Victorian Cardiff.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Welsh Rugby Teams 1880-1
Compiled from SWDN & WM

Aberavon 1&2
Aberdare
Albion, Cardiff
Alexandra Rangers, Newport
Arnold College, Swansea 1&2
Blaenavon Scarlet Runners
Blaina Ironsides
Bloomfield, Swansea
Brecon
Bridgend 1&2
Builth Wells
Burry Port Juniors
Bute Dock Rangers, Cardiff 1&2
Cadoxton, Neath
Cambrian, Aberdare
Canton Rovers 1&2
Canton Wanderers
Cardiff 1&2
Cardiff Proprietary Collegiate School
Carmarthen
Carmarthen Juniors
Carmarthen Training College
Cathays Rangers
Chepstow
Chepstow Grammar School
Christ College Brecon
Cwmavon 1&2
Dare
East Wales
Excelsior, Newport
Green Institute, Neath
Haverfordwest
Hirwaun
Lampeter Town
Llandeilo
Llandeilo Academy
Llandeilo Grammar School
Llandovery College 1&2
Llandovery College Old Boys
Llanelli 1&2
Llanelli Juniors
Machen
Maindee, Newport 1&2
Melbourne, Swansea
Merthyr
Monmouth School
Monmouthshire
Mountain Ash
Mountain Ash Temperence
Narberth
Neath 1&2
Neath Abbey
Neath Institute
Neath Proprietary School
Neath Rovers
Newport 1&2
Newport Crusaders 1&2
Newport Grammar School
Newport Rovers 1&2
Newport Wanderers
Oakfield, Cwmbran
Old Monmouthians
Pembroke Dock
Penarth
Penarth Juniors
Pontardawe
Pontymister 1&2
Pontymister Rovers
Pontypool 1&2
Pontypridd
Porthcawl
Richmond, Cardiff
Risca Star
Roath 1&2
Roath Collegiate School
Roath Juniors
South Wales FU
St. Andrew's College, Swansea
St. David's College, Lampeter
St. Elvan's Aberdare
Star, Aberdare
Star, Roath
Swansea 1&2
Swansea Juniors
Swansea Rovers
Tredegar
United Rhondda Valley
University College Wales, Aberystwyth
West Wales
Windsor, Roath 1&2
Windsor, Swansea

APPENDIX 2

Cardiff and District Rugby Teams 1895-6
Compiled from SWDN & WM

2nd GAV (Cardiff Artillery)
6th Cardiff Boys Brigade 1&2
7th Cardiff Boys Brigade
All Saints Church Lads Brigade
All Saints, Llandaff Yard
Anglo–Bavarian Rovers
Barry 1&2
Barry Barbarians
Barry Boilermakers
Barry Church Lads Brigade
Barry Coal Trimmers (Tippers)
Barry Crescents
Barry Dock Crusaders
Barry Dock Juniors
Barry Excelsiors
Barry Loco
Barry Moulders
Barry Stars
Belgrave 1&2
Belmonts
Bland's Deal Carriers
Bute Docks Workers
Bute Engineers
Cadoxton Crescents
Cadoxton/Stars
Cadoxton United
Caledonians 1&2
Cambrians
Canton 1&2
Canton Hornets
Canton United
Canton Wanderers1&2
Cardiff (& S Wales) Wanderers
Cardiff (Roath) Marlborough
Cardiff 'Quins, 1&2&Weds
Cardiff 1&2
Cardiff Albions
Cardiff Alexandras
Cardiff and District FU
Cardiff Banks
Cardiff Barbarians
Cardiff Boilermakers
Cardiff Boys Brigade
Cardiff Chartering Clerks
Cardiff Clothiers
Cardiff Crescent
Cardiff Crusaders
Cardiff Electrics 1&2
Cardiff Hibernians
Cardiff Hornets
Cardiff Moulders
Cardiff Northern 1&2
Cardiff Old Westonians
Cardiff Postmen
Cardiff Rangers
Cardiff Saints
Cardiff Star
Cardiff Steam Joinery Men
Cardiff Telegraph Messengers
Cardiff United
Cardiff Villa
Cardiff Wednesday Star
Cardiff Windsor
Cardiff YMCA Wednesday 1&2
Carlton Juniors
Cathays 1&2
Cathays Crescents
Cathays Institute 1&2
Cathays Juniors
Cathays Primrose Juniors
Cathays Rovers (Wednesday)
Cathays Stars
Cathays Wednesday
Cefn Mably
Clifton Rovers
Craddock Juniors
Crescent Juniors
Crescent Stars (not Cres. Juniors)
Crescent United
Depot, Welsh Regiment
Dinas Powys
Docks Cabmen
Docks Juniors
Docks Printers
Docks United
Dowlais Magpies/Stars
Duke Street Rovers
Eldon United/Rovers
Ely Paper Mills
Ely Paper Mills Beaters
Ely Paper Mills Binders
Ely Rangers 1&2
Empire Theatre
Glamorgan Police (E Division)
Gloucester Stars
Gloucester Wagon Works
Grange Albions
Grange Raglans
Grange United 1&2
Grangetown 1&2
Grangetown Harlequins
Grangetown Rovers
Grangetown Workingmen's Liberal Club
Grangetown Workmen's Conservative Club
Grasshoppers
GWR Crusaders
GWR Excelsiors
Great Western Rangers
Hamilton/Stars
Havelock Stars
Hayes Rovers
Heath Rovers
Holton Juniors, Barry
Howard Crescent
Iestyn Juniors
Inverness Juniors
Lincoln Harlequins
Lisvane
Llandaff 1&2&Past Players
Llandaff Blossoms/Wednesday
Llandaff Boys Brigade
Llandaff Church Lads Brigade
Llandaff Linton
Llandaff Rovers
Llandaff Stars 1&2
Llandaff Working Men's Club
Llandaff Yard
Llandaff Yard Boys Brigade
Loudoun Hornets 1&2
Loudoun Stars
Loudouns 1&2
Louisa Street Stars
Mackintosh
Mackintosh United
May Street Stars
Melingriffith
Merthyr (Street) Stars
Monkton House 1&2
Moorland Stars
North Central Filibusters/Rovers
Oakfield Stars
Old Monktonians
Park Rovers1&2
Pearl Crusaders
Pearl Street Joinery

Penarth White Rose (Weds)
Pentyrch
Pentyrch Juniors
Pentyrch Rowdy Boys
Penylan 1&2&3
Penylan Juniors
Picton Stars
Radyr Stars
Red Rose
Rhymney Railway Cleaners
Richmond (Road) Crescents
Richmond Road Juniors
Riverside
Roath
Roath Albion (Wednesday)
Roath Albion Juniors (Sat.)
Roath Excelsiors
Roath Park Juniors
Roath Road/ Juniors/Stars
Roath Stars
Roath United
Roath Wanderers
Roath Wednesday
Roath Windsor
Romilly 1&2
Romilly Rangers
Romilly Victorias
Saltmede Crusaders
Sawmills Rovers
Spillers United
Splott Cruaders 1&2
Splott Raglans 1&2
Splott White Star
Spring Wanderers
St. Andrew's 1&2
St. Anne's Rangers
(not St. Anne's)
St. Anne's/ Stars
St. Catherine's
St. David's
St. David's Crusaders
St. David's Juniors
St. David's Rovers 1&2
(not St. David's)
St. Dyfrig's
St. Fagans
St. Fagans Juniors
St. John's
St. Mary's 1&2
St. Mary's Hall School 1&2
St. Michael's 1&2
St. Monica's
St. Paul's
St. Peter's 1&2
St. Peter's Stars
Steam Joinery Juniors
Sydenham Stars
Taffs Well
Taffs Well Juniors
Taffs Well Rovers
Talbot Stars/United
The Windsors
(not Cardiff Windsors)
Theatre Royal
Tongwynlais
Tongwynlais Juniors
Tongwynlais Stars (not
Tongwynlais)
Town Cabmen
Town Printers
Town Raglans
Tredegar Stars/Tredegars
Trinity Crusaders
Ty Mawr, Llandaff North
University College Cardiff 1&2
Victoria Stars
Wellington
Wells United, Canton
Western Wagon Works
Wharton 1&2
Wharton Juniors
Whitchurch 1&2
Whitchurch Harlequins
Whitchurch Juniors
Whitchurch Stars
White Lion Rovers
White Star
Windsor Juniors/Stars
Windsor Stars, Penarth
Windsor United
Woodlands
Woodvilles

APPENDIX 3

Cardiff and District Rugby Teams 1886-7

Compiled from SWDN & WM

Adamsdown
Adamsdown Rovers
Alpine Rangers 1&2
Arabella Rangers
Blue Anchor 1&2
Broadway Harlequins
Bute Dock Harlequins
Bute Dock Wanderers
Bute Town Rangers
Canton Crusaders 1&2
Canton Juniors
Cardiff 1&2&3
Cardiff Borough
Cardiff Collegiate Proprietary School
Cardiff Crusaders 1&2
Cardiff District Football Union
Cardiff Fragments
Cardiff Harlequins 1&2
Cardiff Harlequins Wednesday
Cardiff Hearts of Oak
Cardiff Higher Grade School
Cardiff Higher Grade School Harlequins
Cardiff Higher Grade School Juniors
Cardiff Rovers
Cardiff United 1&2
Cathays
Cathays Board School
Cathays Excelsiors
Cathays Juniors
Cathays National School
Cathays Rovers
Charles Street Rangers 1&2
Cogan
Cogan Rovers
Electric
Ely Rovers 1&2
Grangetown 1&2&3
Grangetown Board School
Grangetown Harlequins
Grangetown Juniors
Grangetown Rovers
Harbour Lights 1&2
Heath Rovers
Llandaff 1&2&3
Llandaff Yard Juniors
Longcross
Melingriffith Rangers
Miskin Street
Monkton House School
Pearl Street Rangers
Penarth 1&2
Penarth Harlequins
Pentyrch 1&2
Presbyterian
Primrose Hill
Radyr
Red Stars
Richmond
Richmond Rangers
Richmond Road Juniors
Riverside Juniors
Roath 1&2
Roath Juniors
Roath Harlequins
Roath Rangers 1&2
Severn Road Schools
South Church Street School
St. Andrew's 1&2
St.David's School
St. Mary's
St. Mary's School Juniors
Taffs Well 1&2&3
Talygarn Harlequins
Tredegarville
Tynyparc Rovers
University College, Cardiff
Wellington Stars
Wesleyans/Rovers
Whitchurch 1&2
Whitchurch Juniors
Whitchurch Stars
White Stars

APPENDIX 4

Social Background of Cardiff Players before 1878

Tredegarville 1870-3

The secretary of Cardiff's first club in 1870, Tredgarville, was C.E. Prior, a teacher at Monkton House, a private school which played rugby from the early 1870s. The head master, Henry Shewbrook, was from Taunton and educated at London University. He was a keen player and promoter of the game. Many of Cardiff's early players had attended Monkton House.

Roath 1873

The Roath team of 1873 included three Cardiff born members of the Cory families. Clifford and Herbert were sons of shipping and coal proprietor John Cory. Clifford later became a baronet and MP.[1] Sexton Campbell Cory was the son of Richard Cory, also a shipping and colliery proprietor. It was his initiative which led to the formation of the Glamorgan club, which he then captained for two years. By the 1880s, all three were employed in family businesses. Another Roath team member was Henry White who became the first secretary of the Glamorgan Football Club. He was a solicitor's clerk (for yet another member of the Cory family) and had been born in Cheltenham. Whether he attended Cheltenham College is not known, but Arthur claims that the Glamorgan club adopted Cheltenham College rules because a number of the players had just left there. Even if White were not an old boy, he may have become involved in rugby as a result of watching the college play and he may have been influential in the club adopting Cheltenham College rules.[2]

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[1] He also was sometime Chairman of the Governors of the South Wales and Monmouthshire School of Mines, the forerunner of the University of Glamorgan.
[2] C.S. Arthur, *The Cardiff Rugby Football Club: History and Statistics, 1876-1906* (Cardiff, 1908), p. 7.

Glamorgan and Cardiff Wanderers 1874-6

Arthur refers to nine men who were involved in officially forming Glamorgan FC in 1874. These included S.C. Cory and White. Of the others, A. Crutwell was a pupil in a mining and civil engineering firm; Fleming S. Thomas, from Bideford, was a bank clerk and later became a stockbroker; his brother (?) J.G. Thomas was later a partner in the same firm; Trevor Thomas, from Merthyr, was a mining and civil engineer; and William Graves, who was a north countryman who came to Wales in 1872 to manage a family chain making business. Graves was probably the most gifted player in Cardiff at the time, having previously played half-back for Manchester. It was later claimed that he was selected to play for the North in the first ever match against the South in 1873 but he turned the offer down to continue playing in Cardiff. The presence of such an experienced player in the newly formed club must have greatly helped its credibility and he was appointed vice-captain. However, by the time of the merger with the Wanderers in 1876, Graves had returned to Manchester FC and became that club's secretary for a number of years. He did eventually represent the North of England in 1876.[3]

Apart from the above, other members of both the Glamorgan and the Wanderers clubs in the 1874-5 season were traced. Londoner, Alexander Duncan belonged to a prominent newspaper publishing family and by 1881 was a proprietor of the *South Wales Daily News*[4]. He later served on the WFU for many years and was the Welsh representative on the IRB 1887-91. George and Edward Fry were two Cardiff born sons of a fuel manufacturer and ship-owner. In 1881 George was an agricultural student and Edward a clerk in a patent fuel works. Edward Fry was Cardiff's first secretary and became club captain the following season in 1877-8 and was a vice-president of the WFU in its inaugural season. Some years later he claimed to have been involved in another (unidentified) local club, apart from

[3] *Western Mail* 29 Mar. 1893; C. Stewart Caine (ed.), *John Wisden's Rugby Football Almanack for 1924-25* (London, 1924), pp. 229, 234 (Graves).
[4] His involvement with the *South Wales Daily News* may explain why this newspaper generally gave more prominence to rugby than the *Western Mail* throughout the study period.

Glamorgan and the Wanderers, before the merger.[5] This may refer to an otherwise unrecorded club or perhaps Tredegarville.

Barry Girling, who came from Bristol, was a coal office clerk in 1881. He won his only cap for Wales in the first international against England. James and William Hood were the sons of Archibald Hood, the colliery owner, who moved from Rosewell near Edinburgh in 1867 to become a leading south Wales entrepreneur. James (and possibly William) was educated at Clifton and Edinburgh University. Both played for South Wales and served on the Cardiff committee in 1877-8. William Hood later became chairman of the Glamorgan Coal Company and he helped to establish and support the highly successful Llwynypia club during the 1890s.[6] John A. Jones was born in Mynyddislwyn and learned his rugby at Monmouth School. He won a Welsh cap in 1883. In 1881 he was a colliery agent and in later life was a colliery proprietor. His brother, W.E. Jones, an accountancy clerk for a coal firm, also played for Cardiff in later seasons. William Penn was a merchant's colliery agent living in The Parade, Tredegarville, in 1881. Originally from Pontypridd, he had been, along with his brother Edward, a member of the Pontypridd team which played Roath. T.S. Donaldson Selby was appointed the first captain of Cardiff in 1876. Though he has proved elusive in any local records, there is a very significant reference to one "T. Selby" in the *Football Annual* of 1874.[7] In its report of Cheltenham College's 1873-4 season, he is described as "an honest player; [who] makes good use of his strength". Since Arthur relates that there were a number of Cheltenham College men amongst the first members, it seems highly likely that this is a reference to T.S.D. Selby, especially as he was a sufficiently prominent member to play for South Wales and be elected the first captain of Cardiff. That the Glamorgan/Cardiff club played Cheltenham College for many years from 1875 onwards is further circumstantial evidence of the involvement of old boys from that school from the earliest days. Charles Vachell was a member of the notable Cardiff family of physicians and druggists. By 1881 he was a general practitioner, having qualified at a London teaching hospital.

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[5] *WM* 3 May 1890.
[6] *SWDN* 1 May 1897.

The members of the Cardiff Wanderers club appear to have come from similar backgrounds. The club captain and founder, William (Bill) D. Phillips, a railway company clerk, was the son of the licensee of the *Greyhound* and was educated at private school. Edward C. Read was an insurance clerk from Cardiff, whilst brothers Cuthbert Riches, a draughtsman, and Herbert Riches, an assistant dentist were members of a Cardiff family.

Cardiff 1876-7

During Cardiff's first season, the following additional names appear among the playing membership. Arthur L. Batchelor was the son of the shipbuilder and timber merchant, John Batchelor, sometime Liberal mayor of Cardiff. In 1881, he was sufficiently well off not to have any occupation. He lived in Penarth and later helped to found the Penarth club whom he captained in 1880-1. A distinguished Cardiff player was William (Bill) F. Evans who was born in Rhymney. The son of a clergyman, he was educated at Christ College Brecon, Sherborne School and Oxford University. He played occasionally for Cardiff over a number of seasons and won two Welsh caps in 1882 and 1883. He was a schoolmaster in later life. W.B. Ferrier, from Cardiff, was a coal office clerk. London born Raoul Foa was a bank clerk. The son of French and Italian parents, he came from a prosperous Jewish family. His father was secretary to a bank, whilst his brothers included a barrister and a member of the stock exchange. Foa was secretary of Cardiff in 1877-78 and was captain the following season when the club reached the final of the South Wales Challenge Cup. In later life he was a very successful businessman in the City of London and was director of several major banks. John Gerhold was another Londoner. He was a solicitor's clerk and later became a councillor in Cardiff. William Herbert was from Newcastle Emlyn and was employed as a ship store clerk. Like J.G. Stothert, he began playing rugby at Cowbridge Grammar School. Alfred Marquand was a shipbroker's clerk. Born in Guernsey, he was a member of a well known Cardiff ship owning family. Yet another rugby playing member of the Riches family was Charles Riches, an engineer's draughtsman. A player who was later to have a great influence on the later administration of the game in Cardiff and in Wales began his association with the club this season. William Treatt, from Exmouth, was

[7] *Football Annual* 1874, p. 24.

educated at Monkton House. He was a clerk to Lloyds Survey and in later life was an official at the Bute Docks. He served as secretary to Cardiff from 1880 to 1892 and also on the WFU for many years, missing appointment as secretary in 1896 by only three votes.[8] At only 24, James Ware was already a ship owner living in Penarth by 1881, whilst Clifford W. Wait was a merchant's clerk. Both were from Cardiff.

Cardiff 1877-8

In Cardiff's second season, old boys of Monkton House continued to join. These included W. Barra and Coniver, whilst Carmarthen born James Bush, who taught at the school, as well as at the Arts and Science School, became a member. He had previously studied at Cheltenham Normal College. Edward Lynch Blosse belonged to a prosperous Vale family and had been educated at Marlborough School. In 1881 he was a land agent living in Cathedral Road. Francis Bruford was from Bristol and was clerk to a coal merchant. Londoner, William Buckle worked as a clerk for a colliery proprietor. Although born in Newcastle, William Dalziel was educated at private school in Cardiff. The son of a colliery manager, during 1877-8 he was serving his articles and in 1880 began practising as a mining engineer. In later life he became secretary to the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coalowners Association. John Jenkins David was born in Ely and was educated privately. He was a clerk in his father's land agency practice. Cardiff born brothers, Arthur and Francis Hybart, were both clerks in the timber trade in 1881. Their father was a timber broker.

Despite being born in Ireland, Bathurst Mann played for Wales in the 1881 international against England. He was then an articled land agent and had probably attended public school, as he played for an ex-public schoolboys XV in a South Wales FU trial match in 1879.[9] Another future Welsh international who joined Cardiff this season was Leonard Watkins. Educated at Sherborne School and Oxford University, he lived in Llandaff and so is invariably, though incorrectly, described (including in official WRU records) as a

[8] WFU minutes 19th Aug 1896: W.E. Rees 36, W. Treatt 33, A.J. Davies 14.
[9] *SWDN* 17 Nov. 1879.

Llandaff player. It is beyond any reasonable doubt that, when he was capped in 1881, he was a Cardiff player. The reference to Llandaff in the records merely relates to his place of residence. It was a common and confusing practice at the time to publish some players' names with their club and others with their place of residence.[10] H.F.D. Sewell had been born in India and was the brother of the English rugby journalist E.H.D. Sewell. He was a bank clerk living in Llandaff. Pembrokeshire born Thomas Sloggett was a post office telegraph clerk whilst Walter Webber, from Cardiff, was also a clerk in the post office. Cardiff born Frederick Trayes was the son of a timber merchant and brewer and was a timber merchant himself. Finally, although there is no record of his playing for the club until the following season, it is generally believed that it was in 1877-8 that Cardiff adopted the colours of a jersey worn by Thomas W. Rees. From Pontypridd, Rees had been educated at Rugby School and at the time was an undergraduate at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge whose rugby XV still play in blue and black hooped jerseys today. In later life he was a solicitor.

[10] For instance, in the WRU's official list of internationals, W.F. Evans (above) is officially recorded as a Rhymney player, though it is unlikely that the club existed in 1882, when he was first capped. Bizarrely, R.D.G. Williams (1881) is officially listed as "Abercamlais" which is merely the name of his family home in Breconshire. He was serving as an army officer in London in 1881 and played a handful of games that season for Newport, which should therefore be his club affiliation. *Welsh Rugby Union 2002-2003 Handbook* (Cardiff, 2002), pp. 397 (Watkins), 385 (Evans), 398 (Williams).

APPENDIX 5

Competitions in Cardiff 1886-7 to 1899-1900[11]

(1) Cardiff District Football Union.

T. Page Wood Cup

1886-7 Cardiff Harlequins

1887-8 Penarth

1888-9 Penarth

1889-0 Penarth

"Best Brand" Junior Cup

1889-0 Cathays Rangers

(2) Cardiff and District Football Union

Mallett Cup

1893-4 Cardiff Reserves

1894-5 Cardiff Northern (league)

1895-6 Roath (league)

1896-7 Canton

1897-8 St. Paul's

1898-9 Mackintosh

1899-0 St. Peter's

[11] Compiled from the *Western Mail* and *South Wales Daily News* 1886-1900 and *Cardiff and District Rugby Union: Official Handbook, Season, 1908-9*, (Cardiff, 1908), p. [1].

Union Shield

1894-5 Roath (league)

1895-6 Mackintosh (league)

1896-7 St. Peter's

1897-8 St. Mary's

1898-9 Grange Stars

1899-0 Roath Reserves

Senior League

1894-5 Cardiff Northern

1895-6 Roath

1896-7 No competition

1897-8 St. Peter's

1898-9 St. Paul's

1899-0 Roath

Junior League

1894-5 Roath

1895-6 Mackintosh

1896-7 No competition

1897-8 St. Andrew's ?

1898-9 Grange Stars

1899-0 Canton Harlequins

Second Junior League

1899-0 Cardiff Barbarians

(3) Cardiff FC

Junior Cup (Age restricted)

1896-7 Canton Crescents

1897-8 St. Peter's 2

1898-9 Penarth United

1899-0 Canton Crusaders

APPENDIX 6

Occupational Structure of Cardiff in 1891 (Males %) [12]

Agriculture and Fishing	0.6
Mining	0.7
Building	11.5
Transport	26.4
Dealing	12.4
Manufacturing	23.6
Industrial Service	17.4
Public Sector and Professions	5.2
Domestic Service	2.1

Daunton argues that transport was the key sector in Cardiff, employing between a quarter and a third between 1871 and 1911. Mining, of course, was negligible, Cardiff being outside the coalfield. As Daunton puts it, it was the *transfer of coal from the railways to the ships* which was the raison d'etre of the town. Manufacturing employed between a fifth and a quarter but only a small number were engaged in large scale factories. Over 10% worked in the heavy industries of iron and steel, ship repair and building, wagon building and engineering, whilst most of the rest were engaged in a wide variety of small scale manufacturing activities, including clothing and food preparation. The remaining occupations were similar to those found in any large town: building workers, shop workers, domestic servants, the industrial services (including general labourers) and the professions. [13]

[12] Table extracted from M.J. Daunton, *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1977), p. 182. The figures were drawn by Daunton from census data 1871-1911.
[13] Daunton, *Coal Metropolis*, pp.181-2, 190-1.

APPENDIX 7

Cardiff and District Club Secretaries 1889-91

Name	Age	Occupation	Place of birth	Club	Source
Thomas Phillips	19	Travelling salesman	Pentyrch	Pentyrch	WM 89-0
Frank Seager	19	Book-keeper	Cardiff	Tyneside (16-20)	WM 89-0
Isaac Chorley	24	Plumber	Somerset	Footlights	WM 90-1
Anthony Proud	22	Plumber	North Shields	Wanderers	WM 90-1
William Morgan	15	Printer's apprentice	Cardiff	Albany Stars (15)	WM 90-1
Bertie Harris	14	Scholar	Newport	Canton Rovers (11-13)	EE 90-1
Arthur Lloyd	19	Coach trimmer	Cardiff	Cardiff United	FC 90-1
David Hopkins	22	Clerk	Llantrisant	Cardiff Rangers	FC 90-1
Thomas Jones	19	Hardware merchant	Llantrisant	Cardiff Cyclists	FC 90-1
Ernest Thomas	17	Plasterer and paper hanger	Cardiff	St. Peters	FC 90-1
Sidney Smith	22	Baker	Birkenhead	Cathays Stars	FC 90-1
William Gardner	19	Office clerk	Sunderland	Splott Rovers	FC 90-1
Richard Jones	19	Plumber's apprentice	Gloucester	Canton	FC 90-1
Sidney Phillips	24	Ship chandler's assistant	Bath	Ely Rovers	FC 90-1
Edward Davies	16	Clerk	Cardiff	Roath Windsor	FC 90-1
Wilson Tunley	17	Clerk	Cardiff	Cardiff Juniors (16), St. David's	FC 90-1
William Johnston	16	Telegraph messenger	Scotland	Clyde Rovers (15)	FC 90-1
Fred Hodson	17	Proof-reader's assistant	London	Star Juniors (13-14)	FC 90-1
Henry Hayes	16	Office boy	Cornwall	Penarth Albion	FC 90-1
Samuel Hall	22	Currier	Llandaff	Llandaff	FC 90-1
Frederick Bosley	20	Railway clerk	London	Cardiff Crusaders	FC 90-1
William Rigby	31	Draper's assistant	Lancs	Cardiff Rovers	FC 90-1
Thomas Grant	20	Plumber	Lincs	Cardiff Star	FC 90-1

Henry Cypher	20	Clerk	Wilts	Taff Vale Wanderers	FC 90-1
John Hall	25	Book-keeper	Cardiff	Cogan	FC 90-1
Ernest Carder	19	Builder's clerk	Cardiff	Cathays	WM 91-2
Eli Hopkins	18	Office clerk	Whitchurch	Whitchurch	WM 91-2
Francis John	18	Clerk	St Andrews	Barry	FH 91-2
John Nelms	25	Compositor	Gloucester	Barry and Cadoxton	FH 91-2
George Dyer	15	Clerk	Cardiff	Cardiff Albion	FH 91-2
Robert England	18	Teacher	Cardiff	Canton	FH 91-2
Thomas Lewis	16	Clerk	Swansea	Ely Juniors	FH 91-2
George Parsons	21	Hairdresser	Dorset	Grangetown	FH 91-2
Edward Lewis	21	Chartering clerk	Cardiff	Heath	FH 91-2
Frederick Barrass	17	Merchant's clerk	Newcastle	Kymin, Penarth	FH 91-2
George Pawley	17	Grocer's assistant	Penarth	Penarth United	FH 91-2
John Thomas	18	Clerk	Pembs	Roath Windsor	FH 91-2
John Richards	16	Coach painter	Cardiff	St. Germans	FH 91-2

Key to Sources: WM (*Western Mail*); EE (*Evening Express*); FC (*Cardiff and South Wales Footballer's Companion: 1890-91*); FH (*The Welsh Athlete and West of England Cycling News Football Handbook 1891-2*).

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